

Dancing and Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies:
Transformative Meaning-Making in an Early Years Literacies Workshop
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Abstract

This case study aimed to develop a deeper understanding of children's literacy experiences and to critically think about the culture of literacies workshop through a postmodern, social constructivist lens. The study explored how to include dance and movement as a means of expression and meaning-making within a multimodal pedagogy. The study took place in a multiage grade one, two, and three French Immersion classroom over a six-week period during the regularly scheduled literacies workshop. Influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach, children are viewed as competent, capable individuals who come to the classroom with important life experiences and stories that they express and communicate in a variety of ways.

Using pedagogical documentation, I observed, documented, and reflected on the children's experiences as storytellers, and considered the influence this had on their identities as meaning-makers and on the teacher's and my own pedagogical understandings of dance and movement as a legitimate means of expression. The literacy experiences shared between the children and the adults are told and critically reflected upon through the stories of dance and movement as they unfolded in the classroom. Through these stories, I argue that dance and movement as a mode of expression supported children in sharing their thoughts, feelings, and connections, and ultimately their growth into more confident storytellers. The inclusion of dance and movement impacted the teacher's and my understanding of who these children are as meaning-makers; supporting the ongoing development of a multimodal literacy pedagogy in the classroom.

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Chapter 1: Where it All Began...

The child is made of one hundred. The child has a hundred languages, a hundred hands, a hundred thoughts, a hundred ways of thinking, of playing of speaking ... The child has a hundred languages (and a hundred hundred hundred more) but they steal ninety-nine.

(Malaguzzi, 1998, p.3)

The Reggio Emilia approach that was born from Malaguzzi's efforts has had a profound influence in all areas of my teaching life, but it has influenced me the most in my conceptualization of language and literacies. Within the Reggio Emilia approach, the arts play a predominant role, and this has been important in the development of my literacies pedagogy. In my years as a classroom teacher I have explored visual arts, drama, and music as languages of and for children. More recently, I have begun to question how the different ways in which children express themselves are used in the classroom and what each means of expression allows. In doing so, I question which means of expression I would label as a "language" and which I would not. This is not to devalue or change the way in which these means of expression are used in the classroom, but it does invite one to critically think about what each mode of communication offers, and what children are able to express by using these modes in different ways.

For me, dance and movement are a means of expression that have seemed just out of reach in the classroom. Yet, Sansom (2011) argues that if children are indeed encouraged to explore the world through different modes, then dance should not be separated from children's experiences and culture. The excitement for this idea to explore dance within my classroom began in earnest a few years ago, when one child in my class used movement and gesture predominantly to communicate. He was not comfortable sharing his words with others and dance

appeared to be the most comfortable and natural way for him to express himself. He told his stories, explored his world, made meaning, and expressed his understandings physically. It was only when he was given opportunities to express himself through his movement that he was willing to explore other modes of communication and discover other ways of meaning-making.

Throughout my own life, dance has been an important tool for me to make meaning of my world and to express myself. However, my ability to share my stories through dance was not valued in school and did not transcend into the realms of the classroom, where our only mode of communication was the written and spoken word. My personal love for dance, and my professional interest in the Reggio Emilia approach, together provide an exciting entry point into which I can explore the value of dance and movement as means through which children are able to express themselves.

I believe that children are competent, capable human beings who come to the classroom with important life experiences and understandings (Rinaldi, 1998), which they then contribute to the classroom community. My love for stories began as a young child, sitting next to the warm library fireplace listening to my elementary school librarian weave adventurous tales together. His stories somehow told my stories. He created a place where I felt I belonged, a place where my imagination could run free. In those moments, my experiences and my stories mattered—they were valued. As Short (2012) so eloquently states, “we live storied lives” (p. 9). These stories are an integral part of life in the classroom, as I believe stories allow children to bring their interests, their lives, and their unique personalities into our classrooms. Short goes on to argue that we “tell stories to make connections, form relationships, and create community with others” (Short, 2012, p. 9). I believe that the ability to share our stories in ways that are meaningful allows children to use their stories to understand and express their own identities and

in doing so understand and connect with one another. The ways in which children are allowed to share their own stories in the classroom affords—or limits—children in their expressions of the stories, and thus, in expressing their identities. The quote above, taken from Lois Malaguzzi's (1998) poem, *No Way. The Hundred is There* resonated with me as a young teacher, as I did not want to prevent children from sharing their stories in ways that were safe and meaningful to them.

Classrooms should be places where children are encouraged to “explore their environment and express themselves through all of their available expressive, communicative, and cognitive languages whether they be words, movement, drawing, painting, building, sculpture, shadow play, collage, dramatic play, or music” (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998, p. 7). I feel that I have just begun to scratch the surface of the many different ways children explore and express themselves. My understanding of language and literacies continues to grow as I explore alongside students and pay attention to the ways in which children choose to contribute their stories.

Stinson (1999) states that “what we teach is who we are” (p. 69) and who we are incorporates our experiences, our cultural understandings, our view of the world, and what we believe about children. Stinson goes on to argue that one way of becoming aware of who we are and what we value is to look at the stories we tell. Stories, I believe, allow us the opportunity to not only share who we are, but also to engage in self-reflection. I, unfortunately, was not offered opportunities as a child to share my stories at school in a method that was meaningful to me. If it were not for my elementary school librarian, who made stories accessible to us all through his animated storytelling, I may never have developed a love for stories in any form. I believe that expression through dance and the stories that dance can tell has the power to be just as inviting,

engaging, and liberating for all students. The purpose of this study was to explore the power and possibility for children to tell their stories through dance and movement during their writer's workshop, called literacies workshop for this research.

Area of Focus and Guiding Questions

This study aimed to be a collaborative process, involving the researcher (myself), one classroom teacher, and the children in her classroom. Together we embarked on a journey to co-construct a literacies workshop where dance and movement were viewed as a means of expression, a mode of communication, and where we (the teacher, students, and I) co-created meaning through our shared experiences. In the dance literature, dance is defined as purposeful rhythmic nonverbal movement and stillness that is usually done to music (Hanna, 2008; Sansom, 2009; Stinson, 1999). It is important to note that when I use the term dance I am not referring to traditional choreographed dance that one would find in a dance studio, but rather embodied expression, purposeful gesture and movement aimed to express oneself. Sansom (2009) argues that dance always includes and uses movement; however, this does not mean that movement is always dance. Therefore, throughout this study I will be using the term movement to describe a mode of communication and expression in which the movement is purposeful and significant but may not always be rhythmical. The term dance will be used to describe the rhythmical use of this movement as a means of expression.

The purpose of this research was to develop an understanding of how dance and movement could be included in our classrooms and how the inclusion of dance and movement affected our pedagogical understandings as educators, as well as how this affected the children's experiences. The primary question guiding my inquiry is: How might an early years classroom literacies

workshop be transformed to include dance and movement as meaning-making experiences for children and what might we, as educators, learn from this?

The specific sub-questions which were used to guide my data collection include:

1. In what ways might we restructure literacies workshop to facilitate the inclusion of dance and movement as a means of expression?
2. How does this restructuring affect the teacher's and my pedagogical understandings of dance and movement as a means of expression within a literacies workshop? How do these experiences influence her and my perspectives and understandings of the children and their meaning making?
3. In what ways does the exploration of dance and movement as a means of expression in literacies workshop influence the children's experiences and identities as meaning-makers?

Theoretical Framework

This study is situated within a postmodern perspective, as this perspective allows the researcher to look at co-constructed experiences and understandings. From a postmodern perspective, the child is viewed as an active co-constructor of knowledge, culture and identity; as having agency, and therefore, having voice within their classrooms, their communities and in their lives (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2013). A postmodern perspective allows for a critical engagement, challenging contemporary perspectives on curriculum, classroom design, and ways of making meaning. From a postmodern perspective our world and our knowledge are seen as socially constructed, where children are able to be active participants in this meaning-making (Dahlberg et al., 2013). A postmodern curriculum emphasizes the authenticity and interconnectedness of learning experiences, of knowledge, of communities and of life itself

(Sansom, 2011). Sansom posits that if we seek to provide authentic learning experiences we must address the marginalized languages of children, which include movement or physical expression. Dance can be an important way for children to communicate, express their identity and make meaning of the world in which they live. This perspective needed to be evident in the classroom in which I worked, as children were asked to co-construct their knowledge by making meaning of the world together with their peers and with adults.

Classrooms should be places where children are encouraged to use many different methods to express themselves and to mediate and make sense of their experiences and the world around them. I believe that it is through access to many means of expression that children are more easily able to do this. Movement can be viewed as a form of social mediation because it is a natural and expressive tool for some children. Dahlberg et al. (2013) argue that “learning is not an individual cognitive act undertaken almost in isolation within the head of the child” (p. 53). Learning is most definitely a social mediation and co-construction which happens with and through others and I would argue also happens with and through our bodies. In dance the mind and the body are equally important to the learning experience (Sansom, 2011).

In what follows, I will provide a literature review in which I situate dance within multimodal literacies, the methodological framing describes the observation and documentation of the inclusion of dance and movement into literacies workshop, and in the final chapters, pedagogical documentation is used to share the children’s and teacher’s literacy experiences through their stories. What I believe is most compelling about this study is the effects that the inclusion of dance and movement had on individual children, as they built their literacy confidence and were able to express themselves in a way that made sharing their ideas accessible. In addition, the effects extended to the whole class, as their experiences with dance

and movement helped to build stronger and more supportive relationships within the classroom. The study also made it clear that dance and movement can be used for all children to support their understanding of literacy practices by experiencing them through their bodies. Therefore, this study is important because it takes dance and movement from the outskirts of learning and situates it as an important mode through which children can express themselves and make meaning of their world around them. This study acknowledges that dance can also be an important tool to support the development of different literacy practices. In addition, it will contribute to the literature on dance and movement as a mode within multimodal literacies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review - Dance as a Mode of Literacy

Children know and explore the world in different ways. Therefore, it is important that teachers include multiple ways of knowing and multiple ways for children to mediate their experiences in their world (Leland & Harste, 1994). Wright (1997) agrees that children engage and interact with their environments in different ways, both verbally and nonverbally. In my experience as an early years classroom teacher for ten years, all children demonstrate a variety of ways to explore, interpret and express themselves, which may include written, oral, and nonlinguistic modes of communication. Therefore, the variety of means through which children express themselves must then be broad enough to reflect the diverse ways in which children make meaning in collaboration with one other (Wohlwend, 2011).

Before discussing the diverse ways children make meaning or what dance may offer as a mode of meaning-making during the school day, it is important to first define what “literacy” is and how it is shaped by multimodality. In September 1994, some of the world’s leaders in the field of literacy pedagogy came together to consider the future of literacy in increasingly diverse times, both socioculturally and technologically. This group, known as the New London Group (NLG), embarked on a project to figure out what and how literacy should be taught in a rapidly changing world (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008). According to Kalantzis and Cope (2008), the NLG’s focus was the on “the big picture, the changing word and the new demands being placed upon people as makers of meaning—in changing work-places, as citizens in changing public spaces and in changing dimensions of our community lives” (p. 196). Through their discussions the NLG coined the term multiliteracies. The concept of multiliteracies was a way of highlighting two significant and interconnected changes occurring at that time; the increasing importance of cultural and linguistic diversity, and the increasing complexity and broadening of texts to include

multimodal forms of representation (Jewitt, 2008; Kalantzis & Cope, 2008). The notion of multiliteracies challenges the traditional view of literacy from one involving the simplistic relationship between reading and writing, to one of a more complex view of meaning-making, which recognizes the importance of a diversity of representations as well as multiple ways of making meaning (Serafini & Gee, 2017). It is important, especially today, that literacy theories are able to account for and support varied texts and communications coming out of this culturally and linguistically diverse and globalized society (Serafini & Gee, 2017). This demands a pedagogy that expands literacy beyond standard forms of written and spoken language to connect with and address new forms of dynamic representation, which reflects our current society (Jewitt, 2008; Serafini and Gee, 2017).

Teachers have the power to construct and shape literacy pedagogy in their classrooms for specific social purposes and to make decisions on which literacies are incorporated, privileged, or ignored. These decisions reflect who and what counts, and for what purposes we engage children particularly in literacies pedagogy (Jewitt, 2008). Sansom (2011) argues that for teachers to create an ethical classroom that addresses issues of inequality, inequity, and disempowerment, the traditional Eurocentric pedagogy, where a narrow view of literacy is defined as involving only reading and writing, must be expanded. Children come to our classrooms equipped with incredible achievements, experiences, and qualities that should be cherished and nurtured, rather than squeezed into a hegemonic culture of norms and standards (Sansom, 2011). Sansom warns that privileging only one way of knowing and making meaning can override other cultural and ethnic ways of knowing and creates challenges for teachers when trying to incorporate other ways of knowing, for instance, dance. Dance is, and should be, a

viable means for children to express themselves and bring their experiences and lives into the classroom.

Redefining Literacy

Traditionally literacy is often characterized as a “set of cognitive skills that individuals acquire to function in society, primarily the ability to read and write to a specified degree of proficiency” (Serafini, 2014, p. 19). Over time definitions of literacy have been challenged, questioned, and reevaluated. Serafini (2014) proposes that the more recent definitions of literacy suggest that it is just as much a social practice as it is a cognitive skill. Therefore, literacy development can be facilitated and supported by how it is used, as well as how it connects to the power structures created by a society (Bainbridge & Heydon, 2017). The definition of literacy therefore needs to expand beyond text-based reading and writing to include multiple ways of navigating and interacting with diverse texts (Bainbridge & Heydon, 2017; Wohlgend, 2011). Changes in how literacy is defined alters how literacy is viewed within a classroom and suggests that literacy is a social, meaning-making activity, and something that people do within a social setting as opposed to a skill that is acquired (Serafini, 2014). By this characterization, literacy cannot be separated from our culture and social experiences, making literacy concerned with making meaning using cultural competencies, situated actions and perspectives, and not simply our ability to read and write (Serafini, 2014; Souto-Manning & James, 2009). Serafini and Gee (2017) state that a pedagogy of multiliteracies aligns with recent pedagogical innovations in literacy. The term multiliteracies allows for many forms of literacies to be included into one term referring to multiple literacies (Gee, 2017). The NLG encourages teachers to “combine, connect, integrate, compare, and contrast all the multiples in literacy in their pedagogies” (Gee, 2017, p. 29).

A Multimodal Approach

Multimodality is the mixing, integration, and application of many modes of communication and representation at the same time (Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Leonard, Hall, & Herro, 2016). A mode of communication and representation is understood within this study as “organized sets of semiotic resources for meaning making” such as gesture, music, image sound-effects, or speech (Jewitt, 2008, p. 246). Van Leeuwen (2005) defines semiotic resources as the actions and artefacts we use to communicate, whether they are produced physiologically—with our vocal apparatus; with the muscles we use to create facial expressions and gestures, etc.—or by means of technologies—with pen, ink and paper; with computer hardware and software; with fabrics, scissors and sewing machines, etc. Traditionally they were called ‘signs’ (p. 3).

Social semiotics takes into consideration that the interpretation of semiotic resources is influenced by past uses, past connections, as well as the social context within which those resources are being used (van Leeuwen, 2005). Semiotic resources, therefore, function as mediators of co-constructed meanings shaped over time through their use within specific social and cultural environments (Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Kress, 2010). In other words, semiotic resources are the primary means by which humans communicate and share their understanding and meaning-making of the world around them.

Modes are able to intertwine different semiotic resources, and include visual, verbal, auditory, and physical expression (like dance) across cultures to represent and express meaning (Serafini, 2014). Multimodality goes further by combining multiple modes within communication and this creates a rich set of semiotic resources which do not rely solely on linguistic expression and allow for greater opportunity to make meaning (Kress, 2010).

Therefore, being literate in a multimodal environment requires one to be able to use these various modes of representation to make sense of the world around them and to convey their meanings within particular social contexts (Serafini, 2014).

When communication, representation, and meaning-making are viewed as multimodal there are implications for educators' literacy pedagogy, as well as for understanding how children engage with literacy practices (Jewitt, 2008). Jewitt argues that by thinking about learning as a "process of design and choice of representation," this puts a renewed focus and freedom on the role of the learner (p. 258). Multimodality allows for a diversity and multiplicity within meaning-making and highlights new possibilities as well as new constraints for communication and representation (Jewitt, 2008).

Kress and Jewitt (2003) propose that a "multimodal approach to learning starts from a theoretical position that treats all modes as equally significant for meaning and communication, potentially at least" (p. 2). Thus, for educators, this means ensuring that literacy practices are based on a critically conceptualized literacy pedagogies. It is important for teachers to maintain a space for traditional literacies, and at the same time, create opportunities where other meaning making modes are viewed as important in their own right. Historically, language arts programs have been dominated by linguistic ways of knowing and the arts have been viewed as less important, as secondary. However, there is a growing understanding that meaning-making extends beyond the traditional literacies (Cope, Kalantzis & Abrams, 2017; Leland & Harste, 1994). There is a profound danger in relying solely on one mode of literacy to make meaning, as "it impedes the development of other ways of knowing and sets unnecessary limits on how and what our students learn" (Leland & Harste, 1994, p. 339). Leland, Lewison, and Harste (2013) make an argument for the importance of the arts-based modes, stating that "while language may

still be the central sign system in language arts classrooms, the arts are integral to the process of expanding communication and supporting oral and written language learning” (p. 127). This is important because it allows for individuals and communities to be aware of and perceive their world differently, through different arts-based lenses, and for the expression of ideas to occur in ways that are not only linguistic (Wright, 1997). It is important to provide opportunities for children to make meaning in a multitude of ways and to develop the knowledge they need to use these different multimodal resources to develop a deeper understanding of their world (Binder, 2014; Wright, 1997). It is imperative that all modes have an appropriate place in literacy practices and that non-traditional literacies are valued for what they bring to communication and meaning-making. Leland and Harste (1994) argue that if we are to truly include multiple ways of knowing into our language arts programs—and I would argue our entire school day—then we need to think critically about the modes that we make available to children.

In my experience as a classroom teacher, there is sometimes a tendency to view the arts as a mode that supplements written and spoken language and to be used only when children are not able to express themselves verbally or in written text. Viewing the arts as a form of expression and communication allows teachers to look at all children’s ways of making meaning and how they might make their thoughts and ideas visible (Binder & Kotsopoulos, 2011). We need to open up our understanding of what multiliteracies can look like in a classroom, which requires that we also include multiple modes and more than just traditional literacies.

A key element to understanding a multimodal perspective, according to Jewitt (2008), is that “meanings are made (as well as distributed, interpreted, and remade) through many representational and communicational resources” in which all modes of literacy play an important but not solitary role (p. 246). Literacy must therefore include communication and

meaning-making represented through language whilst also including non-traditional literacies. In other words, literacy should be seen as including reading, writing listening, and speaking, together with movement, gesture, music, drama, oral storytelling, and play—all modes that are able to be used to make meaning (Bainbridge & Heydon, 2017; Binder, 2014; Binder & Kotsopoulos, 2011; Jewitt, 2008).

Multimodal texts. Jewitt (2008) claims that “how knowledge is represented, as well as the mode and media chosen, is a crucial aspect of knowledge construction, making the form of representation integral to meaning” (p. 241). In other words, the way in which something is represented affects both what is learned and how it is learned. It then stands to reason that if one wants to better understand the multimodal environment, it is vital to explore the ways in which representations of all modes are utilized and featured. Serafini (2014) continues to push this concept further by arguing that there is more to multimodal theory than the choices of which modes to include, or how the individual modes articulate meaning. Rather, it is in the way in which the modes interact with one another that influences the potential for meaning and representation.

Multimodal texts make use of a variety of cultural and semiotic resources in order to communicate, represent, and articulate information or concepts to others (Bearne, 2009; Serafini, 2014). The term *text* must then be broadened to include non-linguistic representations, including movement, music, drawing, or sculpture. Multimodal texts allow children to weave different modes of communication together to create the texts they need to express themselves. For example, dance is made up of gesture, movement, sound, and image woven together to create a representation for expression, for communication, and for meaning-making. Each mode within a multimodal text brings its own potential for expressing and communicating, with each mode

conveying part of the message. Together the modes weave a whole meaning (Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Serafini, 2014). It can be argued that no one mode can fully express a particular concept, idea, or meaning, and that multiple modes are utilized together to create a text (Kress, 2010) or ensemble (Serafini, 2014). Leonard et al. (2016) add that utilizing multimodal learning allows children to have autonomy over their expression and choice over how to best express their ideas and show their understandings. Since each mode has intrinsic affordances it must also then have limitations, but when we combine different modes we are able to bring together the modes that make sense to convey the intended meaning (Cope, Kalantzis & Abrams, 2017).

Structure and cultural conventions. Multimodal texts or ensembles are created within communities and are therefore understood within the social context they are created. Bearne (2009) and Binder (2014) posit that multimodal theories are social in nature and are influenced by the culture in which they occur. Thus, modes are socially constructed by communities and are influenced by aspects of physiology, society, culture, as well as technology within that society (Kress, 2010; Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Serafini, 2014). Modes carry with them a cultural affordance that has been shaped and continues to be shaped over time, which Kress and Jewitt (2003) refer to as *materiality*. They define materiality as “what a culture provides as materials for making meaning” (Kress & Jewitt, 2003, p. 14). Over time materiality gives rise to “resources with regularities shaped by ‘convention’, understood by members of a culture, and usable therefore by them for representation and communication” (Kress & Jewitt, 2003, p. 14). In other words, culture helps to shape and regularize modes and solidifies conventions that are then understood by the members of a culture.

Structure, selection, and arrangement of semiotic resources for creating a message are important to an audience when understanding and making meaning of said message (Kress,

2010). *Design* is the active process of integrating modes and composing artifacts to represent meaning within a multimodal ensemble (Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Serafini, 2014). It is not about the reproduction of “ready-made resources or modes”, in other words, children do not simply draw from a pool of preexisting designs, but rather transform and intertwine various modes to meet the designer’s purpose (Serafini, 2014, p. 52). It is widely understood that written and spoken languages, in Western societies at least, have a structure—a *grammar*—a system of rules and conventions that are fixed (Kress, 2010). Through this research I have become aware of the limitations of the word grammar because of its connection to the conventions of written and spoken language. Although I cannot speak for all arts-based modes, dance does not fit easily within the rules and conventions of grammar. Kress (2010) offers the term *semiotic resource* to mean “resources of representation” (p. 6). Semiotic resources are “socially made and therefore carry the discernible regularities of social occasions, events, and hence, a certain stability” but they are not rigidly fixed (p. 8). Although dance and movement do not fit within a structure like grammar, it does come with its own regularities, rules and conventions, which include elements of dance, or the way one uses space, time, force, body, movement and form (Gilbert, 1992). However loose these regularities are, they allow for the possibility to conventionalize the use of dance and movement for a group within the same social setting. Certainties about language and conventions of language have acted, for many educators, as a barrier to validating other means of communication and meaning-making, like dance and movement (Kress, 2010).

Multimodality and the arts. Multimodal literacy practice, I believe, is commonly created by and reliant upon socially constructed arts-based learning. Examples of modes present in current research involve many different arts-based resources, including photography, sculpture, painting, music, speech, movement, gesture, and sound, to list just a few (Jewitt, 2008;

Kress, 2010; Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Serafini, 2014). It is important to note that modes do not consist of only arts-based resources and artifacts, however for this literature review I am focusing on arts-based modes. For teachers who believe that all learning is socially constructed and who believe in the power of the arts, these different ways of communicating and making meaning are evident when we observe children at play. Yet, Leland and Harste (1994) argue that in school we have a history of confining children to traditional literacies and communicating, which can be isolating. The arts, Wright (1997) proposes, are a powerful tool for children's learning because they encourage and enable children to utilize their "nonverbal, symbolic ways of knowing, thinking and communicating" within their classroom community (p. 365).

As teachers we have the responsibility to open children's learning to different possibilities for making meaning and to create opportunities for children to use their many languages and modes of representation in a variety of social settings (Kendrick & McKay, 2004). In this way, we create opportunities for children to be able to express themselves in this world as they try to make meaning of events and experiences in their lives. We need to value the fact that children come to school with different experiences, ready to express these in different ways. Leland and Harste (1994) state that "a good language arts program is one that expands the communication potential of all learners through the orchestration and use of multiple ways of knowing for purposes of ongoing interpretation and inquiry into the world" (p. 339). It is not just about which modes children are exposed to, but also how we introduce and explore these different modes (Sansom, 2011). Children need to experience different literacies, as this creates opportunities for children to explore and express their identities. Children must understand what each mode is able to express and what constraints it may have in order to use them to their full potential (Adomat, 2009; Bearne, 2009; Sansom, 2011). When children are given the mode of

communication that allows them to express themselves, they will represent elements of their learning that are most meaningful to them (Binder, 2014). When we allow for more modes of communication, we create spaces for children to develop a deeper understanding of their world (Wright, 1997). On the other hand, if we foreclose the opportunities for children to engage in the many modes of communication and expression that are available to them, then we are restricting their ability to express themselves. It is with this in mind that I explore the ways in which dance and movement can be offered to children as a mode of expression, communication, and meaning-making.

Dance and Movement in Schools

“In the pedagogical landscape of early childhood, movement is purported to be central to the holistic development of the young child” (Sansom, 2011, p. 1). There is a growing body of dance research that is influenced by the fields of neuroscience and cognitive science, and which shows that dance education in schools enhances experiential learning by developing somatic knowledge and embodied ways of knowing (Hanna, 2008; Isenberg & Jalongo, 2001; Martin, Snook & Buck, 2018). Martin et al. (2018) argue that “studies have found that dance offers expressive, creative, cognitive and kinesthetic benefits to school” (p. 163). Therefore, they argue that dance is a powerful method for engaging students. By allowing students to learn by doing, they are better able to understand the world around them. Unfortunately, regardless of the already reported benefits of dance in education, and despite a resurgence of dance in popular culture, there still remains very few opportunities for students to experience and explore dance as a means of expression and meaning-making (Leonard et al., 2016; Martin et al., 2018). Sansom (2011) argues that these opportunities occur even less often as children get older.

One reason for this is because movement-related experiences and other experiences that involve bodily activities present challenges for teachers (Sansom, 2011). Some of these challenges include teacher-perceived lack of dance expertise; the fact that dance involves the body and touch, which can be seen as taboo in some communities; and space and time to incorporate dance into our school day (Sansom, 2011). Thus, dance and movement experiences remain on the outskirts of the school curriculum and are most often used to showcase other learning or are justified by connecting the experience to exercise and health (Sansom, 2011). The struggle with this view of dance is that it has the potential to undermine the value dance can have in schools.

A reconceptualization of dance in our schools, provokes educators to ask, if dance and movement are considered a mode of expression and meaning-making, what might this allow for children who have difficulty accessing the traditional literacies of reading and writing (Dils, 2007)? Dils is clear that dance should not only be offered to those students who demonstrate an aptitude for it, but that dance should be available to all students. Dils' assertion requires teachers to ask if this change in perspective towards dance would change our perception of successful or struggling students in school.

Development of dance in schools. Before we continue to look at dance and movement as a mode of expression and communication, it is important to know how dance has been viewed and used in schools in the past. Dance programs have been found in schools for many years, however not widely spread. Laban's (1947) influence is visible in much of the existing curriculum of dance in schools. He argued for the importance of dance and movement in schools; however, his dance curriculum was based in developmentalism, where one skill is mastered before new skills are taught. Sansom (2011) articulates a contrasting view to Laban's,

specifically that, a curriculum that is focused solely on mastering independent skills or on cognitive development and where children's play and physical experiences are limited, constrained, and prescribed is seriously limited. It is not just what is in the curriculum that is important, but also how it is implemented.

In the past, two of the main reasons for incorporating dance programs into schools were to promote motor development and to allow for an alternate expressive outlet (Murray, 1975). It was proposed that if children could learn to control their bodies this would help them learn to control their emotions and their behaviour, because children need to move to express themselves (Murray, 1975). Murray argued that a child who is "forced to resist these natural outlets will often explode or retreat in less desirable directions" (p. 12). In this way, dance and movement have been and continue to be related to physical, emotional, and intellectual development (Boorman, 1973; Gilbert, 1992; Isenberg & Jalongo, 2001; Murray, 1975; Zakkai, 1997).

In this research, I will explore ways in which dance can be used in schools as a means of meaning making and of expression. Boorman (1973) points out the danger of dividing knowledge and development when she argues that in their quest to foster math, reading, and writing teachers have forgotten to build bridges across the disciplines. One way in which some educators were trying to overcome this in the 1970's was by incorporating creative dance into the school day. Creative dance was seen by Boorman as one way for children to explore and experience language. Through the act of weaving together the world of words and the world of movement, children's ability to express themselves and communicate was deepened (Boorman, 1973). In her book *Dance and Language Experiences with Children*, Boorman provides an example of how creative dance could be used to help children develop a rich understanding of words:

Creative dance provides one of the ways in which children may encounter and experience language. A simple way to start this encounter is with two-worded pictures:

<i>swirling</i>	<i>floating</i>	<i>whispering</i>
<i>settling</i>	<i>flying</i>	<i>whipping</i>
	<i>twirling</i>	<i>frisking</i>
	<i>fading</i>	<i>settling</i>

Adding words, substituting words, and changing the order of words soon help children to grasp the idea that dance is painting 'word pictures' in space. As we paint pictures in red and yellow colours, similarly in dance we make visible 'word picture' out of 'twirling' and 'settling'. As red is painted next to blue, so may 'rushing' be placed next to 'fading'. Such simple explanations as these are easy for children to grasp, and they help children understand that dance is yet another way of painting pictures. As the painted picture may seem to tell a story, be dramatic, be exciting or soothing, so too may the movement picture. (Boorman, 1973, p. 1)

The concept that children are natural movers, use movement to express themselves, and understand the world around them has been evident for many years. Giguere (2011), Laban (1947), Sansom (2011), and Snowber (2012) all argue that children use gestures and movement to communicate their needs and wants before they learn to use words and that they have an innate urge to move and perform dance-like movements. These movements, according to Laban, are a manipulation of our everyday movements and gestures. Snowber and Sansom agree that children move because it is a natural way for them to express themselves until they are habituated otherwise. Snowber posits that all children have a dance of their own, which she calls their body signature (p. 53), however this can easily be lost as children move into formal and physically restrictive learning environments.

Sansom (2011) argues for a postmodern perspective on dance, one which seeks to provide authentic learning experiences, and in doing so addresses the marginalized “languages” of children including physical expression and dance as means of expression. Teaching, through the lens of a postmodern curriculum, celebrates the interconnectedness of learning experiences, knowledge, diversity, and life itself (Sansom, 2011). This requires teachers to value and incorporate children’s experiences and look at them from a holistic point of view, connecting mind and body. Sansom proposes that for this to occur there needs to be a shift in thinking about children’s bodies in school. Children’s bodies cannot—and should not—be confined and must be allowed the freedom of physical engagement and self-awareness. This is a dramatic shift from a traditional view where children are confined to desks and are required to remain still to learn. Dance, Sansom states, is connected to an inside awareness, emotions, thoughts, and, memories.

Not only is it essential then that children *have* the opportunity to engage in meaning-making through dance and movement in school, it is equally as important to consider *how* this opportunity is presented. A teacher can teach movement skills in a systematic order by constant dictation and direction, or she can let children learn it (Murray, 1975). Movement can, with guidance, be learned through experimenting, exploring, and figuring out which movements are satisfactory and for what reasons they work (Gilbert, 1992; Murray, 1975). Gilbert (1992) argues that it is also important for children to learn about the elements of dance alongside their exploration in order to continue supporting their ability to use dance creatively. I agree that it is important to provide children with the tools they need when they need them in order to fully explore, create, and express themselves.

Dance and movement in the curriculum. Although the Manitoba Education Arts Curriculum includes dance as part of the curriculum, the majority of the curriculum outcomes

look at dance as performance and as a way to develop an understanding of space and relationships between rhythm and people. There is one curriculum outcome which encourages children to “experiment with dance to communicate ideas derived from a variety of stimuli.” I believe that this can be expanded further so that children can be invited to use dance to explore and communicate ideas, stories, and feelings, as well as to authentically express themselves. In my experience, and as conveyed through the literature above, dance can be a valuable mode of communication for children, fostering multimodal expression and meaning-making.

Defining Dance and Movement

The definition of dance has long been debated by scholars, educators, and dance professionals, with the terms *dance*, *a dance*, and *dancing* often being used interchangeably to mean the same thing (Murray, 1975). In the early 1970s the word dance, for most scholars, meant the learning of a dance as a performance (Murray, 1975). During this time, dance-like movement, which included the use of movements that were connected to learning activities (like Boorman’s example given above) was beginning to find its way into schools. When children were given this freedom to explore movement it was called creative dance (Boorman, 1973; Gilbert, 1992; Murray, 1975).

Creative dance, it was argued, had the ability to open up new worlds of knowledge, self-expression, and creativity (Gilbert, 1992; Isenberg & Jalongo, 2001; Richard, 2017; Zakkai, 1997). Creative dance was viewed as important for development because it aided in developing problem solving skills, enhanced cooperation and acceptance of others, increased awareness of students’ own and others’ cultures, and promoted self-expression and self-esteem (Gilbert, 1992; Isenberg & Jolongo, 2001). In other words, when teachers made creative movement an integral part of the school experience, children’s development in all areas was enriched and supported.

More recently, scholars and dance teachers working in schools have defined dance as movement that involves the manipulation and refinement of everyday movement through intentional patterns and sequences (Sansom, 2001; Stinson, 1988). Laban (1948) and Stinson (1988) argue that dance is indeed made up of movements, but not all movement can be considered dance. Sansom (2009) states that dance is “not what we do, but how we do it” (p. 168). Intentionality, communication, and expression differentiates dance from everyday mundane movement. Dance, as it is defined for this research, involves an awareness and purpose of movement (Stinson, 1988). Both Sansom (2011) and Stinson (1988) agree that dance is more than just a combination of movements, and therefore our definition of dance must include the connection of mind and body, feeling, and mood as it is expressed or felt through the communication or creation of a dance. According to Hanna (2008), “dance may be a vehicle, or an open channel, for purposeful communication” (p. 492). However, effective expression and communication through dance and movement require a shared and common understanding between the performer and the audience (Hanna, 2008). This shared understanding must be co-constructed and will be influenced by the children’s individual knowledge and creativity, as well as the group’s culture, values, beliefs, and norms (Hanna, 2008).

Situating Dance and Movement Within this Research

Much of the literature involving dance in schools views dance as a language of its own with its own system of rules that can at times be attributed to similar characteristics of other languages. Due to this view, researchers borrow terms from language to discuss dance as a means of expression. Cancienne and Snowber (2003) talk about how dance enables children to “write out of our bodies” (p. 248). Leonard et al., (2016) argue that “dance is a literacy” (p. 339), and go on to argue that dance has its own “vocabulary, uses grammar and relies on semantics”

(p. 339). Newbald and Goodwin (2004) state that dance has a “language of its own, one without words” (p. 106). Pickard and Earl (2004) talk about dance “vocabulary” and how we can “read” movement (p. 112). Dils (2007) makes the argument that we can attribute some of the same characteristics that other literacies hold to dance. As an educator, I am aware of the dangers of borrowing terms from one mode of literacy and forcing them to fit into another. I understand the intention of scholars as they argue for the connection between dance as a means of expression and other modes or languages. Pickard and Earl (2004) argue that the language of one mode can be used to help enrich the understanding of another. Using linguistic terms can be seen to assign a different value to dance as communication and can be used to help develop an understanding of how dance can be used as a means of expression and communication. However, I am also aware as a researcher and educator, that the structures of dance are very different to those of other forms of communication. There are established rules about putting words together in written or spoken language for an intended meaning to be understood. Although sometimes these rules are intentionally broken for effect—like in poetry—writers remain aware that they are choosing to break these rules. There are also important rules and structures to using dance as communication; however, these rules do not equate to those of sentence structure or spelling. That said, I am arguing that dance should be considered as a valuable mode of expression and meaning-making and should be valued for the unique and flexible structure that it does bring, as opposed to being forced to fit within the structures of other forms of communication and meaning-making. I would argue that what makes dance a powerful mode of expression is exactly what makes it difficult to define as a mode of literacy.

Students and teachers need to think critically about how oral, written, and multimodal forms of literacy are designed to function, and how these different forms accomplish this (Gee,

2017). Gee (2017) proposes that although children need to be able to use forms of communication in socially and culturally appropriate ways that fit within their conventions, they also need to be able to redesign and transform these modes to push the boundaries of development. Throughout this study dance and movement have been viewed as the combination and utilization of individual physical movements (sometimes rhythmically and sometimes not) as a means of expression and meaning making. The individual movements work together to signify what the storyteller wants to communicate within a socially shaped community. Dance in this research can therefore be defined as a mode: an organized set of individual movements or semiotic resources used for making meaning. A *dance text* is thus defined as a collection of individual movements put together with the intention to communicate an idea, story, or concept. Leonard et al. (2016) remind us that the inclusion of different modes of expression does not displace the importance of reading and writing, but it does open up opportunities to explore literacies in more complex ways.

Dance and Movement within Multimodal Theory

There is an interesting relationship between multimodality and embodiment as the “human organism can only experience the world through sensory modes because it has a body capable of perceiving *and* enacting through the senses” (McVee, Gavelek & Shanahan, 2017, p. 151). When people learn within a cultural process their bodies cannot help but be involved in this process because learning occurs through experiences not by memorizing facts or words. School often requires children to learn with disembodied minds, where paying attention requires children to be physically still. Yet, this does not mean that still children are actually focusing on the task at hand (McVee et al., 2017). Snowber (2012) suggests that for some children and adults it is only in movement that they can inhabit a still mind. This is something I frequently observe

in myself and in the children I teach. Often, the mind and body are viewed as working independently of each other. Albright (2011), Cancienne and Snowber (2003), Isenberg and Jalongo (2001), Martin, Snook and Buck (2018) all work to dissolve this separation that exists between the academic mind and the physical body. In order to reconnect the mind and body in schools, the body must become central and lived experiences must be valued. Cancienne and Snowber (2003), in particular, argue that how the body is viewed in school determines its relationship and its connection with learning. There is, Albright (2011) would argue, an urgency to bring back the marginalized experiences of embodied learning.

One way in which to reestablish the relationship between mind and body is through a broader view of literacy; one where a combination of dance (a kinesthetic form of expression) and writing (a cognitive form of expression) can both be explored as modes of expression (Cancienne & Snowber, 2003; Pickard & Earl, 2004). Giguere (2011), Sansom (2011) and Snowber (2012) all argue that children are able to use their bodies to translate their thoughts, questions, explorations, and play into meaning. As an early years educator informed by Reggio Emilia, I ask children to draw from the rich experiences of their everyday lives and not from a decontextualized idea. By including dance as a mode of literacy in early years classrooms, dance then becomes viewed and valued as another way of knowing in school (Dils, 2007). The inclusion of multiple modes of literacies has the ability to begin a conversation about the importance of valuing children's different ways of expressing their ways of knowing and understanding. Given that we live in a world of multimodal literacies, a focus on only written language is problematic (Jewit, 2008). Modes do not work in isolation from each other and therefore, as educators, we cannot separate dance and movement from other means of expression. Sansom (2011) argues, and I would agree, that dance is too often excluded from

these arts experiences and should be included. Dance and movement are valuable modes that must reside along with music, art, and oral storytelling.

Chapter 3: Methodology

My intention with this research was to develop a deeper understanding of children's literacies experiences within the social environment of the classroom. I hoped to co-construct meaning around, and think critically about, the culture of literacies workshop within the classroom. It was important to me that the research was guided by children's experiences and ideas, and therefore, it was imperative to use a methodology that allowed for children's voices, ideas, questions, and experiences within the data collection. I used a case study methodology as it has roots in the social constructivist approach, which is built on the principle of social collaboration (Baxter & Jack, 2008). From a social constructivist perspective, this study invited the classroom teacher, as well as the children, to collaborate in the process of how literacies workshop was transformed to include dance and movement as meaning-making experiences.

While there are many examples of case studies in a variety of qualitative research disciplines, there does not seem to be a consensus within the literature on the design and implementation of a case study (Bassey, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Yazan, 2015). VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007) state that the past "three decades of scholarship on case study research [has] produced more than 25 different definitions of case study, each with its own particular emphasis and direction for research" (p. 81). Within the multitude of definitions, designs, and understandings on offer, it is not uncommon for case study researchers to both agree on some methods while simultaneously disagreeing on others (Bassey, 1999; Tellis, 1997; Yazan, 2015). Yazan (2015) aimed to synthesise these different approaches and offers three perspectives held by prominent methodologists Robert Yin, Sharan Merriam, and Robert E. Stake. Yin (as cited in Yazan, 2015) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates the case or cases ... by addressing the 'how' or 'why' questions concerning the phenomenon of interest," whereby

the case is a “phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context” (p. 138). Merriam (as cited in Yazan, 2015) defines a case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (p. 139). Stake (as cited in Yazan, 2015) aligns with Merriam in that he also sees case studies as a “bounded system” which can be used to study programs and people. However, Stake does not give a precise definition. Merriam (1998) proposes that a case study is both an “integrated system” and a “bounded system”; these concepts together allow Merriam (as cited in Yazan, 2015) to establish a case as:

a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries. I can ‘fence in’ what I am going to study. The case then, could be a person such as a student, a teacher, a principal; a program; a group such as a class, a school, a community; a specific policy; and so on. (p. 27)

Baxter and Jack (2008) state that binding a case enables the researcher to determine what the case will be, as well as what the case will not be. This is because one common mistake that can be made when using case study methodology is to endeavour to answer a research question that is too broad for the study.

Although there are differing definitions of case study, Tellis (1997) proposes that a distinguishing characteristic of case studies is that they “strive towards a holistic understanding of a cultural system in action” (p. 8). Baxter and Jack (2008) argue that the reason it is possible to use case study methodology to examine a cultural system or population at a given moment is because it gives the researcher the opportunity to “explore and describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources” (p. 544). Wilson (2009) agrees and states that this ability to

“provide a view of a population at [a] given moment in time” is one of case study’s strengths (p. 6). Thus, in this study I have chosen case study as a methodology because of its ability to focus on one case; observing a small group during one part of their day, literacies workshop, in order to develop a holistic understanding of how dance and movement can be included as a mode of expression and meaning-making. I believe that case study methodology enabled me to observe the effects of including dance and movement into literacies workshop in an authentic way. Case study methodology allowed for observation and recording tools that did not interfere with how the children were using dance and movement to make meaning but did allow us all, the teacher, children, and me, to record and re-experience our stories, questions and wonderings throughout and after the study.

One criticism of case study methodology is that because it is dependent on single cases often involving a small sample size, the conclusions are not generalizable (Tellis, 1997). Yin (as cited in Tellis, 1997) defends the generalizability of case studies, though, and argues that the methodology should not be considered “microscopic” because of its small sample size, but the “goal of the study should establish the parameters, and then should be applied to all research” (p. 5). Merriam (1998) poses the argument that different types of research are based on different assumptions of reality. One of the assumptions underlying qualitative research is that “reality is holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing; it is not a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured” (Merriam, 1998, p. 202). For this reason validity or trustworthiness should be considered from a “perspective congruent with the philosophical assumptions underlying the paradigm”, and this may include renaming the concepts themselves (Merriam, 1998, p. 200).

Guba (1981) refers to the trustworthiness of qualitative research within a naturalistic approach where generalizability is talked about in terms of “transferability” (p. 80). From this perspective, researchers do not attempt to “form generalizations that will hold in all times and in all places, but to form working hypotheses that may be transferred from one context to another depending upon the degree of ‘fit’ between contexts” (Guba, 1981, p. 81). Stake (1995) refers to generalization within case studies as *naturalistic generalization* in which the reader’s knowledge and personal experiences are drawn on, where people look for patterns to explain experiences as well as events in the world around them.

The goal of this case study was to provide a snapshot of the dynamics and complexities of a classroom during literacies workshop. It was specifically designed to examine how the inclusion of dance and movement would affect the children’s and the teacher’s experience by looking at them within the framework of literacies workshop. This case study was bounded in: (a) a specific location, specifically that of a multiage classroom; (b) time frame, in that I collected data for a six-week period during literacies workshop which occurred during a specific block of time each day; and (c) range of experience for the children, including experiences that related to dance and movement as expression and making meaning.

Through this study, I aimed to better understand the teacher’s, the children’s, and my own experiences in the literacies workshop, as well as my pedagogical decision-making during literacies workshop specifically in regards to dance and movement as a mode of literacy. My intention was to share the experiences from this research as a catalyst for critical thinking about which modes are included in literacies workshops. I aimed to create a study in which the findings inform the literature, understandings, and practices of including dance and movement as a valid means of expression and meaning-making.

Context of the Study

In order for this research to be authentic there needed to be real collaboration between participants—between the children and me, the classroom teacher and me, and the children and their teacher in order to co-construct experiences. The goal then, was to ensure that the children took on roles as meaning-makers and as active participants in their learning, just as they would throughout the rest of their day at school. Kim and Darling (2009) argue that the investigation of “children’s discourse is valuable not only for understanding individual and group learning experiences but also for illuminating children’s agency and their active roles in their own learning” (p. 137). Because I intended to examine the ways in which dance and movement influenced children’s meaning-making experiences, facilitating the agency of each child was integral to the study.

Participants and processes. The participants in this study included: me (as a teacher-researcher); Laila (a pseudonym), the collaborating classroom teacher; and the children (those who provided assent and parental consent) within Laila’s classrooms. The study took place in a multiage—grade one, two, and three—French Immersion classroom in a large urban school. The class was composed of eight boys and nine girls, the majority of whom are learning French as their third language since many of them speak a language other than English at home. The study was a six-week case study occurring during a time of day known as literacies workshop, which usually took place daily for 60 to 90 minutes in Laila’s classroom.

During the study, I worked as a learning support teacher in this dual track English and French Immersion early years (kindergarten to grade five) school. As a learning support teacher, I regularly collaborated with multiple classroom teachers on how to best support all students’ strengths, interests, and needs. This support ranged from creating individualized education plans

to co-teaching in the classroom, where I aimed to get to know students and who they are as learners. My role as a learning support teacher already entailed similar duties to that of a teacher-researcher, that is, planning, discussing, and debriefing with the teacher, and documenting observations and conversations with children. However, during the study, the documentation and notes that I would normally have kept to guide my discussions with teachers and our pedagogical decision-making became part of the data collection process. (This is explained more fully below).

Literacies workshop. The data collection was multifaceted (which is described more fully below) and occurred through observations in the participating teacher's classroom and through conversations with the participating teacher over the six-week block of co-teaching during literacies workshop. Literacies workshop in Laila's classrooms began with a read-aloud of a mentor text (a text that we would use with the children as a guide or model to inspire and inform our own writing/meaning making processes). A mini-lesson followed the read-aloud, which was either based on a literacy practice demonstrated in the text or based on a literacy practice the children were exploring in their own writing. Time for uninterrupted writing was provided and the children were encouraged to explore the literacy practices from the mini lesson. The workshop ended with a sharing time where children were invited to share their stories in either a large group or in small groups with their peers, in which Laila or I (as the support teacher) recorded the children's observations, discoveries, and questions. Following the literacies workshop, Laila and I would take a few minutes to discuss what we had observed when working one-on-one or in small groups during the writing time and what came up during the sharing time. This information was then used to plan the next literacies workshop.

During this study, the overall structure of literacies workshop remained the same. The workshop continued to be co-planned, except that the teacher and I deliberately sought out and infused opportunities for children to engage in the workshop using dance and movement along with other literacy practices. These opportunities included dance videos (of both professional dance or movement by children); music that inspired children's stories, which were then expressed through movement; dance and movement activities in which we explored the elements of dance; or visuals which displayed or inspired movement. In addition, iPads and iPhones were available for either the teacher or the children to record their stories, allowing for a visual representation of the children's meaning making efforts, and thus, allowed for these representations to be recorded and shared with others.

Data Collection Methods

I chose pedagogical documentation as a method of data collection as a logical fit for this study, as it was consistent with my practices as a learning support teacher in classrooms (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2013). Pedagogical documentation aims to “see and understand what is going on in the pedagogical work and what the child is capable of without any predetermined framework of expectations and norms” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2013, p. 154). Pedagogical documentation allows the teacher-researcher to “identify what was happening in the events, to learn from them, and then plan” (Merewether, 2017, p. 4). Richard (2017) asserts that pedagogical documentation provokes teachers and students to “revisit and reflect on their learning and to confront issues that arose in the creative process” (p. 74).

Pedagogical documentation also fit with the data collection methods used in case studies, which can include documentation, interview transcripts, physical artifacts, records of direct observations, as well as participant observation (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554). Baxter and Jack

(2008) argue that case study research allows researchers to integrate many different data sources, enabling a more complete and well-rounded understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Each data source is viewed as “one piece of the puzzle” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554) which, when pieced together, uncovers a more robust picture of what is going on within classroom events. Baxter and Jack go on to argue that it is through this process of piecing together information from various data sources that findings are strengthened and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon is promoted.

I am also aware of the challenges that I could have faced using multiple data sources, in that I could become easily overwhelmed by too much data. I used the reflective practice of pedagogical documentation to support the ongoing analysis of data collected and to enable the children, teacher, and me to assess what was meaningful and relevant. According to Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013), pedagogical documentation is vital in creating a “reflective and democratic pedagogical practice” (p. 153). I aimed to establish this research within an ethical understanding that children’s ideas are worth being listened to. Merewether (2017) agrees that pedagogical documentation allows for the researcher to identify and reflect on what is going on during data collection and to be able to learn from and plan further events. In order to make the children’s learning, questions, and experiences with dance and movement visible, documentation was displayed through *pedagogical documentation panels* within the classroom. The documentation panels included photographs of children’s experiences, lists summarizing our class conversations, as well as children’s questions, thinking, wonderings, and learning.

Pedagogical documentation as a data collection method was integral to this research because it is a process that I already enlist in my role as a learning support teacher. Pedagogical documentation is the means by which I record my observations of children, their theorizing, and

their meaning-making. Then, often alongside the students, the classroom teacher and I would use this documentation to consider our theories and to make pedagogical decisions, specifically, what we plan to do next and why. Pedagogical documentation is a process that the teacher and children in this classroom were already familiar with, making it a natural choice as a data collection method.

Collecting data with/from children. At the start of the six-week formal inquiry I invited all the children from the participating classroom to have an informal small group conversation with me about their understanding of what makes someone a storyteller, a writer, a dancer, and an author. The guiding questions for this conversation included:

- a) Tell me about some of your favourite stories and why you like them.
- b) What makes a person a good storyteller/writer/author/dancer/illustrator?
- c) What are the various ways that we can share our stories with others?

These conversations were optional and were conducted in groups of about four to six children. From my experience as a classroom teacher, I often found that small group conversations allowed children to be able to share their ideas more freely and create opportunities for all children to have a turn to speak. These conversations were recorded and transcribed as I hoped to gain an understanding of how children view storytellers and what characteristics they used to describe people they believed to be good storytellers, writers, dancers, and authors. The conversations between the children and me would begin to frame my inquiry into how the children in this classroom viewed themselves and others as literacy learners. The same conversations were again conducted at the end of the six-week formal inquiry to consider the ways in which the children's experiences and understandings of literacy had evolved.

Collaborating teacher. Laila was invited to participate in two conversation-style interviews to reflect on the literacy experiences in her classroom: once before the classroom inquiry began and again after the classroom inquiry period. Through the initial interview I sought a better understanding of the teacher's understandings and experiences with multimodal literacies. The questions that helped to guide the preliminary interview included:

- a) Describe your teaching philosophy and your approach to teaching? What influences you?
What is important to you?
- b) Can you speak about the experiences you have had with literacies workshops
(collaborating with others, exploring different ways of implementing workshops)?
- c) What are some of the strengths and challenges you find in your or other teachers'
literacies workshop?
- d) Describe what literacy experiences look like in your classroom; in your writer's
workshop as well as what this might look like during other times in your day?
- e) What do you find valuable about the experiences your students are having and why?
- f) In what ways do you incorporate dance and movement into your workshop pedagogy and
what are your general observations of children during such experiences?

During the final interview I hoped to give the teacher the opportunity to reflect on the formal inquiry. In order to better understand her experiences and perceptions of engaging in dance and movement during workshop time, I conducted a conversation-style interview following the six-week inquiry. I hoped to gather information about how using movement and dance had affected her pedagogical understandings and if this work influenced her perspectives and understanding of the children in her classroom. Prior to the interview, I provided her with the following questions to consider:

- a) How has this experience changed your understanding of movement as a meaning-making mode?
- b) How has this experience influenced your perspectives and understandings of the students in your classroom and their meaning-making?
- c) Can you speak about how these experiences have been important learning for your own pedagogy?
- d) Did any of the literacy experiences stand out to you as important ‘aha’ moments or critical moments for you or the children?
- e) Can you speak about a few memorable moments from the six-week inquiry?
- f) What would you change going forward with literacies workshop?

The conversations were audio-recorded and were selectively transcribed and analyzed. (See Appendix I and J for the interview protocols).

Throughout the study I used a combination of pedagogical documentation from our co-planning, co-teaching, on-going classroom documentation, as well as my audio recordings of classroom conversations with children. Pedagogical documentation of all these experiences was used to make children’s questions, learning, and process visible. Included in this pedagogical documentation were artefacts created by children, photographs of children’s experiences, summaries of classroom conversations, and children’s explanations of what they had explored and what they had discovered.

Teacher-researcher data. In this research project, I took on the role as a teacher-researcher, collaborating with the classroom teacher while also observing and documenting the experiences occurring in the classroom. Rinaldi (1998) reminds us that the challenge for teachers is to “be present without being intrusive” (p. 118) when conducting research in one’s classroom.

I remained aware of the fact that pedagogical documentation requires the researcher to be a participant (in my role as a learning support teacher) and a documenter (as the researcher) and that the ideas and questions of children, classroom teacher, and me would be documented as fully as possible. By working together as co-constructors of knowledge within literacies workshop, my hope was to create opportunities for authentic meaning-making experiences. Through discussions and reflections on the experiences occurring in the classroom, the classroom teacher, and I attempted to address challenges that arose and explored the many different ways that children might have of expressing themselves.

The teacher's, the children's, and my stories, questions, and wonderings were recorded through both audio recordings and in my field journal. Field journal entries included students' and the teacher's comments, which were taken in short hand (using one or two words or short phrases) as spontaneous conversations happened. These short hand notes were expanded on after the fact, often at the end of the school day, where I attempted to recall and record more detailed accounts of the events, as well as of the students' questions and comments verbatim. Some of the students' comments that are shared in the findings chapters have been extrapolated from my field notes. Although these are presented in quotations, they are drawn from my expanded field notes that were often created during my end-of-day recounting.

According to both Rinaldi (1998) and Dahlberg (2013), teachers aim to create environments where both adults and children listen to each other and give value to what others have to say. The role of teacher-researcher is not solely to observe and recount what happens, just as pedagogical documentation requires not only documentation of what has occurred, but also involves the children and other adults in the ongoing collection and interpretation of data (Dahlberg, 2013; Merewether, 2018; Rinaldi, 1998). I aimed to share the findings of this study

through the stories of the participants and therefore ensured that the participants had the opportunity to discuss and contribute to the interpretations and perspectives of the literacy experiences.

Summary of data collection methods. Table 1 lists the research focus, guiding questions, and corresponding data collection methods.

Table 1. Research Focus, Guiding Questions and Data Collection Methods.

Research Focus	Guiding Questions	Method of Data Collection
Restructuring of literacies workshop	In what ways might we restructure literacy workshop to facilitate the inclusion of movement as a means of expression?	Field notes, journal entries and audio recorded conversations of collaborating teacher's and my conversations related to workshop planning and debriefing
Pedagogical Understanding	In what ways does this restructuring affect the teacher's and my pedagogical understandings of dance and movement as a means of expression within a literacies workshop? How do these experiences influence her and my perspectives and understandings of the children and their meaning-making?	Field notes, journal entries and audio recorded conversations of collaborating teacher's and my conversations about children's experiences Pedagogical documentation: field notes of observations of children engaged in and discussing their experiences of dance and movement as a means of expression
Children's experiences as meaning-makers	In what ways does the exploration of dance and movement as a means of expression in literacies workshop influence the children's experiences and identities as meaning-makers	Pedagogical documentation: field notes of observations of children engaged in and discussing their experiences of dance and movement as meaning makers; audio-recorded conversations of children describing their experiences; artefacts representing students' experiences (their written,

		drawn and video-recorded representations of their experiences),
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Approval Process, Recruitment, and Ethics

After receiving ethics approval from the university research ethics board (see Appendix K for the Ethics Approval Letter), I obtained approval from the school division superintendent (see Appendix G for the letter of request and consent form) as well as from the school principal (see Appendix H for the letter of request and consent form). A letter of invitation was sent to all teachers at my school providing details of the study, including criteria by which teachers were to determine whether their practice aligned with what I was seeking for this study. The letter of invitation also included a consent form (see Appendix F for the letter of request and consent form). Interested teachers who self-identified as meeting the criteria and who were interested in participating in this study were asked to respond via email. I chose the first teacher who responded and who had self-identified as meeting the criteria as the teacher participant.

To be clear, I do not have a position of authority over any of the classroom teachers with whom I work. I have no administrative authority and do not have the authority to change things about teachers' schedules, resources allocations, practices, or their environments without their consent. The structure of learning support teachers related to classroom teachers is that of co-teachers.

All students in the participating teacher's classroom were then invited to participate in the study. In order for me to use students' experiences (including written, oral and dance and movement), as well as the participating teacher's and my recorded observations of their comments and responses to these experiences, I obtained written consent from the students' parents or guardians (see Appendix C for the letter of consent), as well as assent from the

students themselves (see Appendix D). Steps were taken to ensure that students and their parents/guardians understood the research process and how data would be collected and used. A letter introducing the case study (see Appendix A) was provided to all families along with an opportunity to attend an informal information session (see Appendix B) about the process. I also provided families with a possible script (see Appendix E) to offer support to parents/guardians when having conversations with their child about considering their assent. As per the letter of consent, families were informed that providing permission to use any data involving their child was completely voluntary and their consent could be withdrawn at any time during or after the study without my knowledge and without consequence to their child.

As a learning support teacher, I did not have any responsibility for evaluating students, including assessments for report cards. Student assessments remain the sole responsibility of the classroom teacher. My role as a learning support teacher was to collaborate with the teacher in ways that she saw fit within the practices of her classroom. In addition, the classroom teacher was never informed of which families provided consent to participate.

In order to assure families that there would be no positive or negative consequences to their decision to permit or restrict their child's participation, all consent and assent forms were collected in the school's office prior to any data collection occurring. An envelope addressed to the school secretary was included with the consent form and parents/guardians were asked to return their consent form in this sealed envelope to the office. Consent forms were kept in a locked cupboard in the office until the end of the term in which the data was collected. Neither the classroom teacher nor I knew which children and families had given assent and consent before and during the data collection period. I did not have access to the consent or assent forms until the end of the term in which the data was collected (March 31, 2019). Permission to

participate could have been withdrawn at any time by parents/guardians during the process of data collection by submitting a notice to the school office, where it would have been kept confidential until after data collection was complete. This ensured that all children participated equally in literacies workshop during the period of time data was being collected, whether or not families had given permission for their child(ren) to participate. In order to ensure confidentiality of participants, both the children and their teacher have been given pseudonyms. In addition, the school name and district and all other identifying information has been assigned pseudonyms or has been fictionalized.

I collected all data during a six-week period in the spring of 2019. At the end of the term in which the data was collected, I accessed the sealed consent and assent forms. Data (including field texts, journal entries artefacts, audio recordings and videos) concerning any student who did not provide consent or give assent was destroyed, deleted or redacted and not used in the writing of my thesis. All data collected, journal entries, field notes, audio recordings of conversations, and artefacts representing students' experiences (including copies of their writing, drawings, videos and audio recordings) remained locked in a cabinet in my office when at school and were transferred to a locked cabinet in my home during the period of time in which I was writing the thesis. Data from students with both consent and assent remain locked in my home office cabinet and will be destroyed by December 2020.

Analysing the Data

It was the process of pedagogical documentation that continued to guide my decisions around what to include as data in this case study and allowed for a co-constructed perspective on how the inclusion of dance and movement affected our pedagogical understandings as teachers and how this affected children's experiences. This process opened the possibility to review

children's experiences and have conversations with the classroom teacher and with the children about these experiences and what they meant to those involved. In other words, pedagogical documentation enabled me, together with the classroom teacher and the children, to revisit and reflect upon the events and experiences as they were taking place as well as after the study was complete. The process of pedagogical documentation allowed me to bring together all data sources for analysis, including artefacts representing children's experiences of dance and movement, transcripts of audio recorded small and large group classroom conversations, transcripts of conversations and interviews with the classroom teacher, and my field notes. Throughout the study, I kept field notes and detailed records of movement and dance activities students were choosing to pursue during literacies workshop. I looked for critical moments of children's engagement with dance and movement that might provide insight into their understanding and theorizing. For this study, critical moments were considered as such if they manifested one or more of the following criteria: instances of heightened engagement, excitement about stories, an important discovery, expressed challenges or frustrations, and student wonderings. Critical moments could also include students directly telling me, their teacher, or their fellow students that a significant moment had occurred.

Through pedagogical documentation many critical moments materialized and I collected data relating to these moments. The critical moments in the data were analysed for themes and emerging patterns (based on the criteria above) and the pedagogical documentation was reorganized to reflect these themes and patterns. Through this reorganization of the pedagogical documentation, stories began to emerge: stories of children's excitement; stories that took us by surprise; and stories of the children's and the classroom teacher's discoveries. Some stories stood out as a critical moment on their own while others worked together entwining with one another

that were part of a larger narration. The decisions concerning which stories and experiences to include were based on which of the documented experiences had the potential to offer insight into both the teacher's and the students' understanding of dance and movement as a means of expression and meaning-making tool.

I chose to use *pedagogical narration* to illustrate and explore these stories of our time together, examining key moments and questions. Pedagogical narration refers to the analysis and discussion of pedagogical documentation (Hodgins, 2012). Hodgins (2012) states that pedagogical narration is the process “by which educational experiences in early childhood settings are narrated and made visible in the public realm, thus becoming subject to . . . thought and dialogue” (p. 4). Narrations work to share the stories of complex experiences and practices of children and have the potential to begin conversations, think critically, share knowledge, and transform practices all through story (Hodgins, 2012).

One shortcoming of case the study methodology is that it is a bounded system, and therefore this research was bound with literacies workshop. Alternatively, children's authentic learning experiences involving dance and movement were, however, not bound to only this time of the day. Children's literacy learning was integrated throughout the day, and therefore, there were rich moments of children's learning that I missed out on documenting because it occurred during different times of day. Another shortcoming of the design of this study was in the fact that I did not have the capability to record all of the data that I would have liked, including the small group conversations happening during literacies workshop. In hindsight I would have increased the number of recording devises and utilized them for conversations in which I could not be present. I believe this would have given me further insight into the children's perspectives and points of view.

Chapter 4: The Pedagogical Narrations

Over a period of six weeks, the classroom teacher (Laila) and I took on the task of critically thinking about literacies workshop in her classroom in order to facilitate the inclusion of dance and movement. Laila and I decided that the workshop format was integral to the use of multimodal literacies. This is because the workshop format allowed us to introduce mini-lessons that were responsive to children's questions, needs, and modes of expression. Within her mini-lessons, Laila already utilized mentor texts, often a picture book, to introduce a literacy concept or practice. I wanted to take advantage of this well-established routine to introduce multimodal mentor texts, which would also allow for the introduction of dance and movement. Children were able to use their storytelling time following mini-lessons to choose the mode through which they wanted to express themselves. This allowed children an opportunity to choose dance and movement as a mode to share their stories, their ideas, and their interests. It was important to me that dance and movement be introduced in the same way that Laila introduced all modes of expression. Over the six weeks, Laila, the children, and I recorded our exploration of dance and movement as a means of expression and meaning-making through pedagogical documentation panels. The documentation panels enabled me, as a teacher-researcher, to observe, reflect on, ask questions about, and understand who the children were as storytellers, as literacy learners, and as dancers or movers.

Critical Moments are Illuminated through our Stories

The narrations below examine moments of heightened engagement, moments of increased excitement about stories, and moments when the teacher and the children discovered something about themselves as meaning makers and storytellers. The findings also highlight the teacher's and the children's experiences with dance and movement and examine their

engagements with these experiences. Moreover, they emphasize the ways in which these experiences influenced the teacher's pedagogical understanding and the children's identities as meaning-makers. I have sorted these critical moments into three parts in order to group the critical moments together with other similar experiences.

Logue, Robie, Brown and Waite (2009) argue that to support children in becoming more successful and confident writers, teachers should utilize "the skills and dispositions that children bring to the learning experience" (p. 221). This was a perspective that resonated with both the classroom teacher and me as we began restructuring literacies workshop to include dance and movement, and thus, better reflected the breadth of children's interests, strengths, and skills. It became clear to us toward the end of the data collection period that the children had taken ownership of how they wanted to share their stories and their ideas.

The first narration describes how the emphasis on incorporating dance and movement into literacies workshop changed our conversations, as well as the direction of the mini-lessons. Here, I examine specific moments throughout literacies workshop that facilitated these changes. I will also show how our exploration of dance and movement began to enter into other parts of our day, and how we were able to use dance and movement as a way to make meaning of what was going on around us.

The second narration depicts three critical moments that I did not anticipate and shows the unexpected impact of the inclusion of dance and movement on this classroom. These are not examples of how children used dance or movement to express themselves, but rather how dance and movement allowed these children to access positive identities and cultivate their own voices through storytelling. In all three of these stories, I believe that dance and movement as a means of expression and meaning-making allowed the children to feel confident that their stories were

being heard. These stories share how children came to express what they were exploring, experiencing, thinking, and feeling.

The third narration highlights the teacher's experiences, drawn from the transcripts of her reflections shared during her interviews, together with my field notes of our conversations. This narration describes how the experiences of dance and movement in literacies workshop have influenced and altered her pedagogical understandings and practices.

It is important to note that these pedagogical narrations are organized by theme and do not reflect the chronological order of events. The themes shared through my findings emerged during the final interview with Laila. It was evident as she spoke about her observations of children's experiences that she and I had both found many of the same critical moments important and influential. The narrations that follow are a snapshot of these important moments. Dance and movement were introduced as an additional mode of expression but did not encompass all that occurred during the workshops. Children continued to write their own fiction and nonfiction books, to share stories through puppets of all kinds, and to create drama productions of their stories. There were times when literacies workshop was filled with movement and everywhere you looked you could see children exploring with their bodies. There were also times when the classroom was still and children sat working on written or illustrated stories.

Setting the Scene through our Documentation

Throughout the study, the documentation panels which we had posted in the classroom were added to and changed to reflect our lived experiences and questions. Decisions of what went into our documentation were made collaboratively by Laila, the children, and me. Our documentation panels conveyed summaries of the explorations, the questions, and the ideas of

the children. They document the evolution of dance and movement in this classroom. This section is a brief overview of these panels and the important moments are described and analysed in more detail below.

Our documentation began with Laila and my initial question to the children: “What are different ways we can tell our stories?” (see Figure 1). This question led to the exploration of different modes that could be used to tell a story, which included using puppets, shadow puppets, music, speech, acting, dance and movement. At the same time, we kept track of characteristics the children thought would make a good story, and which they wanted to try in their own storytelling. Throughout our exploration of the different modes, Laila and I planned mini-lessons where we introduced and explored the use of each mode. One such mini-lesson, pictured in



Figure 1: The different ways we can share our stories

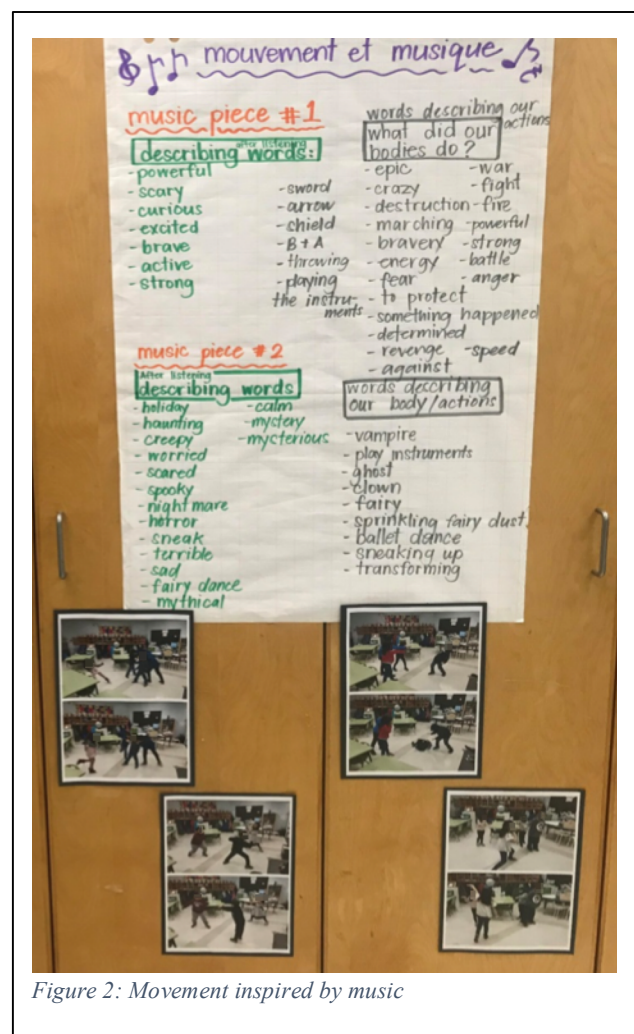


Figure 2: Movement inspired by music

Figure 2, focused on using movement to express a story or idea. On this particular day Laila and I gathered the children on the carpet to listen to *O Fortuna* by Carl Orff and *Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy* by Tchaikovsky. These are two very different pieces of music: *O Fortuna* is powerful and strong whereas the *Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy* is soft and gentle.

We began with *O Fortuna*. The children sat on the carpet, closed their eyes and were invited to create pictures in their head as they listened. Following our first listening, I asked the



Figure 3: Showing emotion through our body



Figure 4: Communicating with our body



Figure 5: Multiple modes of communication

children to share words that they believed described the music (seen in green in Figure 2). With these words in our minds I invited the children to get up and move to the music. The children were asked to “Show the music with your bodies.” As the music ended, the class gathered back on the carpet to reflect on the experience and add any additional describing words to our list. Ricardo noticed that “We have lots of words now, way more.” He was right, the new list (seen in black in Figure 2) was twice as long as the first list. As a class, we wondered why we would be able to come up with more words after we moved to the music. Richard assured us that “It is because we experienced it.” The act of experiencing the music enabled the children to understand it differently, and therefore, they were able to describe it better. This was exactly why I chose these two very contrasting pieces of music; I hoped the children would experience different movements when expressing different ideas.

The concept of experiencing our world through our bodies continued as children began to explore emotion in their storytelling (see Figure 3). Laila and I combined the children’s exploration of emotion with the ways in which children were using their bodies to express themselves and invited children to share ways they could express emotion through their bodies (see Figure 3). The children took on a leadership role as they chose which ideas, activities, and emotions they wanted to document (see Figure 4). The children explored different ways to document individual movements which could then be used to create dances and stories (see Figure 5). While the children were exploring, photographing and sharing movements they were using to express different ideas, Benoit began to call these movements “*smoovement*”. When asked why, he explained that it should be “Smoovement and not movements because we put music or sound effects with our movements [to help the audience know what we are saying].”

And so a new term was coined to describe the combination of movement and sound as the children used the two together to create meaning.

Throughout the six weeks the adults and the children had access to Post-its and pencils beside the documentation panels and were encouraged to add their thinking, learning, questions, wonderings, as well as their success and struggles (see Figure 6). This enabled Laila and me to make the children's and our own learning visible, and allowed me to be able to reflect on how children were using dance and movement as a means of expression and what was important to them.

Pedagogical Narration: Children's Experiences Guide our Mini-lessons

On one particular day about two weeks into the study, Laila and I began literacies workshop with music as an inspiration for movement. Using music to inspire the children's experiences was already something we had done (as the example described above). The purpose

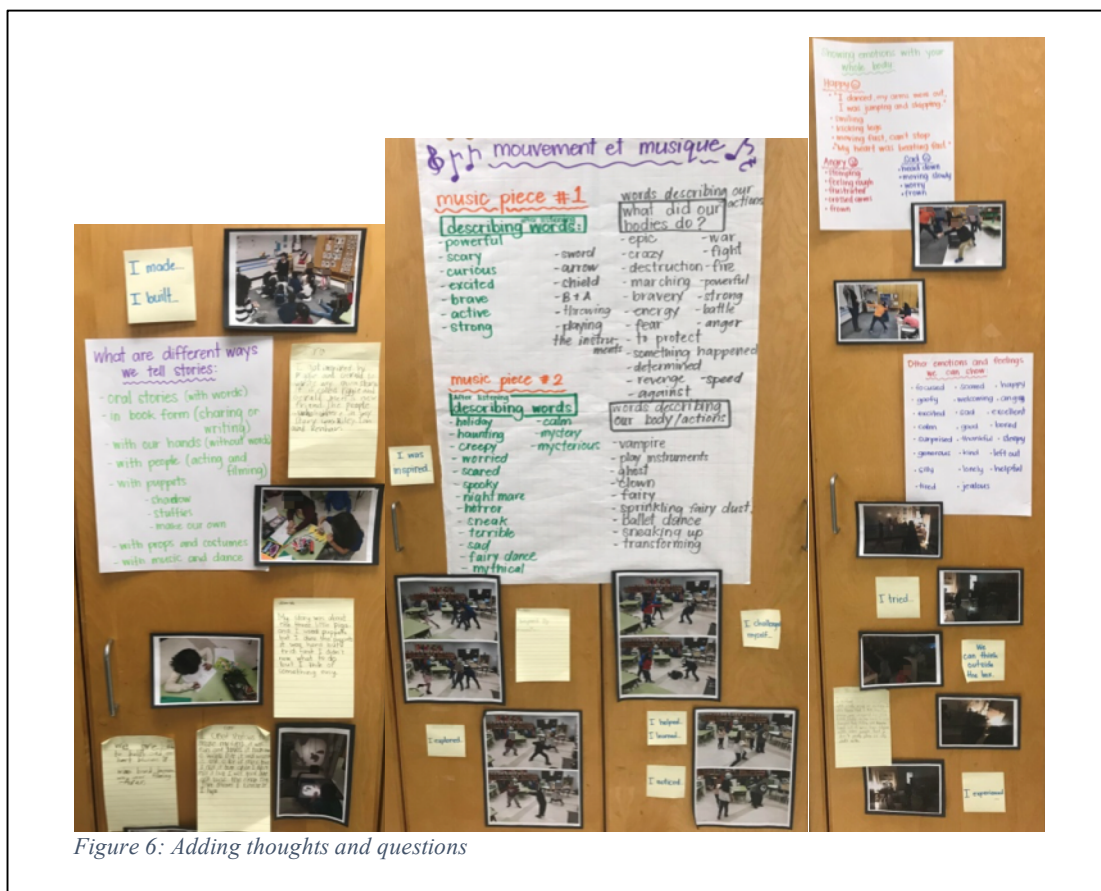


Figure 6: Adding thoughts and questions

of the first music experience had been to introduce the children to different forms of movement by using two very different kinds of music (which included *O Fortuna* by Carl Orff and *Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy* by Tchaikovsky).

Today's mini-lesson had been inspired by Richard. He had used music instead of words to depict what was going on in a shadow puppet story he had created. Richard's puppets retold the story of the Tortoise and the Hare with the use of his own composition (which included drums and xylophones) and music Laila used in the classroom. When the characters were racing Richard used his chaotic fast pace composition and when the characters were relaxing he used the classroom's yoga relaxation music. Richard's video inspired his classmates to explore music to see how it might help shape their own stories. While Laila and I contemplated whether to bring this concept to the whole class as a mini-lesson she reminded me that experiencing music through our bodies was what had helped children to describe the music and their movement stories, so using music together with our bodies to inspire and impact storytelling would be a logical step.

The purpose of that day's mini-lesson was to give the children an opportunity to experience how music might influence what we think a character might be doing or feeling by paying attention to the music. In other words, Laila and I aimed to give the children an opportunity to experience the music through their movement so that we could explore how music can affect our movements, and therefore, how music can affect our storytelling. Laila and I listened to a few pieces of music from *Walt Disney's Silly Symphony* series because these pieces of music are already composed to aid in storytelling. We searched for music that took us on a journey, that had different dimensions within the music. We settled on *The Skeleton Dance* composed by Carl Stalling because of the dynamics it offers. For example, there are moments

where it sounds silly, dramatic, or spooky; there are familiar sound effects including a dog/wolf howl and a clock chime; and there is a whimsical rhythmical dance section in the middle.

Interpreting music through our bodies. To begin the mini-lesson, I gathered the children on the carpet and explained that the purpose of the day's movement mini-lesson was to explore what we were hearing with our body. I asked the class to listen as they moved and to be aware of how the music influenced or changed what they were doing. I reminded the class that after moving to the music we would come back and talk about what they had done, about the stories they had created, as well as how the music had helped to guide their stories. I explained that today's experience would be different from the last time we used music because this time we were not going to sit and listen to the music first. Instead I explained that I was going to put the music on and when the children were ready they could start moving. The reason I chose to do this is because in our previous experiences by the time the children had spread out and found a space in the classroom to start the activity many of them had formed groups and begun to plan what their story was about. I felt that because we were going to be focusing on how the music affected our movement and our stories I wanted children to have the opportunity to share their own story without the initial influence of their peers. I instructed the children to find their own space in the classroom and when the children were quiet I reminded them that once they had a story idea beginning to form or when they heard something in the music that inspired them to move they could start moving. I put the music on and began filming their movement.

The music played and children began to move. As I looked around the room I observed a few children clearly acting out stories and others moving to the music: following a pathway, moving in circles, rocking back and forth. A small group of boys, including Alejandro and Vergel, caught my eye because they were chasing each other as the music became more

dramatic. The music calmed but the small group were too caught up in their chase to notice. I shouted a reminder over the music, “Children, remember to listen to the music, show me the music with your bodies.” The chasing slowed to better match the music. I look around again and noticed Benoit was being blown back by an imaginary wind, Lilibeth was walking creepily behind Jasmine as she pretended to run away, Richard was pacing back and forth rubbing his chin and pretending to drink from an imaginary cup. I could not help but wonder where the music had taken the children, what stories were they going to share, and where the children who were moving together telling the same story. As the music faded away, Laila and I gathered the children on the carpet. On our way to the carpet Ricardo had said, “I didn’t know what to do at the beginning ’cause I didn’t know what other people were doing.” I asked him if I could share his frustration with the class because maybe some other children felt the same way. This would allow the class to talk about their experience so we could decide together how we might do it next time, if we did this activity again.

Once all the children were settled on the carpet we invited children to share their responses to the experience:

Jenni: Where did the “smovement” take you today?

Richard: It took me to like, it reminded me how hard it’s going to be to grow up. Like the work you have to do when you get a job, you have to do a lot of things, like I have to get up, drink my coffee, go to work.

Rubylyn: I was lost in the woods and when the wolf was howling it made me feel like I got scared

Vergel: I was battling Beyblades with Alejandro to be the first Beyblader.

Miriam: When it was swelling music I was like close to the poles and it was very cold and windy.

Jenni: Like the North and South Pole?

Richard: Not like a metal pole

Jenni: No not that pole. The North and South poles on the map. The white parts on the top and bottom.

Benoit: We were walking in the forest to make a camp and I heard the wind and I thought it was a monster and then I looked everywhere for a camping spot and I found one.

Lilibeth: Jasmine was dragging me around and Ava and Marisol were following us and we started running. We were being creepy silly clowns.

Alejandro: The same, war and battles with Vergel.

I shared Richard's comment and asked the children what they thought about it. Vergel and Alejandro agreed that they found it different at first and they also didn't know what to do when the music first started. Alejandro shared, "I looked at what my friends did and then I joined them." Vergel shared, "I was acting my own story but then the music got loud so I joined Alejandro."

Although the act of not having a plan to start their movement made some children uncomfortable at first, it also seemed to help them pay attention to both the music and the movements of others. Vergel and Alejandro had interpreted what might be happening in the group's story so that they could join in. This appeared to be an important concept in expressing oneself through dance or movement: the audience needs to understand and interpret what the dancer (mover) is expressing. I wondered, when I looked at the list of stories the music inspired, whether children were drawing on their own experiences and fitting them to the music. I did not

get into this conversation at this time, however after literacies workshop was over, I asked Miriam and Vergel where their story ideas had come from. Miriam explained, “We learned about countries and the map.” Vergel said, “We battle BeyBlades at recess.” I made note of this connection to talk about another time as writing about what you know and your experiences is a concept that Laila talks about when someone in the class is struggling to know what to write about.

Loud voices on the carpet brought my attention back to the children as Alejandro and Vergel were talking about the fact that they were doing the same BeyBlade story and they each shared their own ideas of what this story had been about. A conflict arose because each boy argued that *he* had survived the final battle. It became apparent that even though their stories where connected, there were differences. These differences in the children’s interpretations spurred the following exchange:

Richard: But how is that possible [that they each survived the final battle]? Alejandro was in the same group as Vergel, right?

Jenni: Well it doesn’t matter that they were in the same group be—

Richard politely interrupts: I know that it doesn’t matter that they were in the same group but then he said what he thought of and then it was like a different *perception*.

Laila and I stopped and looked at each other! Yes! We felt that something exciting was brewing in this conversation. I had not expected the conversation to go in this direction: perception, perspective. I wondered where this conversation would go and the potential of learning about our perceptions and perspectives. When we watch dance and movement stories we interpret them from our own perception; our experiences, our beliefs, our understandings all influence how we perceive and interpret dance or movement. For children to understand or even

just begin to think about how others might interpret their dance or movement story could potentially influence how they use movement and even which movements they use.

In that moment, I looked at Laila and quietly asked, “Should we change this up?” I quickly explained to Laila, while the children waited patiently on the carpet, that we could invite the children to redo these same stories and see what happened to the stories from different children’s ideas, experiences, and perceptions. Layla agreed and suggested that we let the children decide which story they want to tell. This was a split-second decision so I was not sure what would happen or if the children would even want to participate in this activity. However, Laila and I decided to abandon the original purpose of the mini-lesson, which focused on how to use music to aid in storytelling, and see where this new direction would take us.

Understanding our own and other people’s points of view. We got the children’s attention and thanked them for their patience and explained that Laila and I had an idea that we would like to try, if they were interested. I explained that we would like to invite them to retell these same stories but this time they may be telling the story with different people and that this might or might not change the story. I went on to explain that they did not have to retell the same story, if they saw a story on the list that they would like to tell they could. The whole class seemed very excited looking around at each other pointing at who they wanted to work with, many responded with an enthusiastic “yes.” So, I went over the list of stories one by one (which we had documented on the white board) and asked the children to stand up if they were interested in telling that particular story. Some children wanted to continue working on the story they had already done while others abandoned their stories and joined a different group. I suggested that they take a few minutes to talk through their story so everyone in the group had an opportunity to add ideas or not, but at least they would all know what was happening in the story.

Once their group had agreed upon the story they could start deciding which movements they would use to tell the story. I let the children know that if we had time we would come back together and share each story to music for the whole class. A child asked if we could guess which story was which after they shared rather than introducing the story before they shared. I agreed that this would be an interesting idea and the class agreed with a show of hands.

Once the groups were organized the children found a space in the classroom to work. Most groups sat down and started to talk through their story so Laila and I walked around listening to the groups plan. Laila and I came back to share what we had heard while the children worked on their movement. We discussed that in some groups children were taking ownership of their own stories. This was evident when I had observed Benoit's group, as he had chosen to stick with his own story, and was taking on a leadership role explaining the story and guiding his friends' ideas to make sure they fit. For example, when Ricardo wanted the howling to be a wild animal not the wind, Benoit suggested that the wild animal was hiding and when the wind (which was the monster in the original story) scared them and they ran, the wild animal could chase them. Laila and I were interested to see what would happen with the different stories. Were all the stories being altered? Would any of them stay the same?

I put the music back on once I saw children beginning to plan movement for their story, as I wanted children to continue being aware of the music even if it was no longer affecting the direction of the story. It was clear that the children were thinking about the movement they were using as the group of busy "adults" paced quickly in short pathways crisscrossing each other and getting in each other's way, stopping and looking at each other with frustrated looks, taking a sip of coffee and rushing off again. The four children portraying creepy clowns split themselves in to twos so that one person could be the clown and the other person would be trying to get away

from the clown. The clowns rocked from side to side almost moving like zombies (see Figure 7) while the other person crouched making their body take up as little space as possible as they scurried away. When all the groups where ready we gathered back on the carpet to share each groups movement story.

Each time a group shared their story hands shot up to guess what their story was about and to guess the details of the story; in other words, to determine what exactly the group was saying with their movement. Different children had different ideas of what they thought was going on. This was evident during Benoit's story: Ricardo began crouched on all fours hiding from the rest of the group who was in sitting in a circle. The children in the circle made small hand gestures in the center of the circle representing the camp fire. Benoit heard the howl in the music and motioned to Ricardo that it was time for him to move. Ricardo crept over beginning on all fours and then running over to the children moving his arm in front of each child in turn. The children shivered and one by one escaped under his arm and ran away. Once the story was



Figure 7: Creepy silly clowns

finished, one child shared they thought Ricardo was “Being a wolf”, while another child thought he was “Being the wind”, and another child thought that maybe he was “Being a vampire.”

Richard reminded us that it was our own perception that was influencing our ideas. The bell rang and so we left the conversation there for the weekend.

After the children were all outside at recess, Laila and I discussed how impressed we were at the conversations we had just experienced. Laila mentioned she was shocked at the vocabulary the children were using and that she did not expect Richard to know the word perception, let alone apply it to why we had different ideas of what one movement meant. I shared my surprise as well and told her that even though I have used dance and movement in classrooms before, the conversation had never touched on the idea that how we interpret movement is influenced by our perceptions. I asked Laila if she this would be a concept that she thought would be worthwhile to follow through on. Laila explained that she saw the potential that this concept could have in many different areas in her classroom as she saw connections to children’s problem-solving conversations, or when they talk about empathy in their classroom, or how the idea of perception could connect to explorations time when children ask questions, explore, build, and experiment. She and I agreed that children’s perceptions of movement was an important concept to explore. I could not wait to come back from the weekend to continue our conversation about the different ways we could share our stories and what perception means to these children within the context of storytelling.

Adding more detail to our movement. In our planning conversation on Monday morning, Laila and I had decided that instead of sharing what we had done on the weekend orally in a sharing circle, we would ask the children to share what we did through movement. I explained my thoughts to Laila about how sharing in this way might help us to guide our

conversation about perceptions of movement. This is because I believed that children would need to use their own experiences and what they know to interpret what the movement was communicating. I asked her what she thought about sharing our weekend stories with no words. I hoped that this would give children the opportunity to experience a familiar routine in a different way. Laila agreed and suggested that we give children opportunities to explore movement independently, telling their own stories, and then depending on how it was going, possibly separate into groups to work together on a shared story.

Up until this point in the study our exploration of movement without music had most often involved physical storytelling, or in other words, acting out the story without words. During our exploration of movement in which the music was our inspiration, children had moved between either physical storytelling or dance. For some children this involved parts of a story being acted out and parts in which there was rhythmical movement. One example of this was when Richard switched between dance and movement while telling the story of the battle that was created while listening to *O Fortuna*. He moved between acting getting his weapon, hiding behind objects, sneaking up on his others to rhythmic galloping, jumping, and running to get to another place in the classroom where he would start acting out another part of the battle.

When literacies workshop finally arrived, Laila and I gathered the children on the carpet, eager to pick up our conversation of perception. I started by asking Richard to remind us of what perception means, he replied:

Richard: What different perception means is like what other people see of the same thing. It's like different views of a thing, different perceptions. So it is basically like views and what other people see.

Laila: Can I give an example to help everyone understand this a bit better? We do this all the time, we do an activity about this.

Benoit: I know – it is when we do “think outside the box”¹

Laila: We all start with the same shape but we all think it is something different.

Richard: It’s one thing but with a lot of differences.

I explained that I wanted us all to share what we did on the weekend only using our bodies and no words. There was a ripple of excited exclams and Benjie jumped off the carpet in excitement. I asked the class if this was something they would like to try, however, I felt that I already knew the answer from their reactions. They responded with a chorus of loud yeses. I went on to explain that when we were done with the instructions we were going to find their own space in the classroom and show—using movement—something they had done on the weekend. Laila reminded the children that just like when they write, if they couldn’t think of what to share they could think about a favourite meal they had eaten or a game they played to help get them started. Richard asked for clarification about whether they were to use tableau or movement. I thought about this but quickly decided that I would let them choose which made more sense to them. Before Laila could ask them to find their own space, Jasmine was on her feet moving to the space in the classroom she always went to begin movement. Once all the children were in their own space, I instructed them to show me something they did on the weekend, and the children began to use their bodies to act out their stories. After about a minute, while children were still

¹ “Think outside the box” is an activity that Laila does with her class where she gives them the beginning of a shape and each child is asked to look at it from all angles and decide what they see. Once they have an idea in their head of what they see they are asked to use the beginning shape to draw a picture. For example, one day when I was in their classroom before the study began, the children were given this  as their starting shape. Some children saw this as the beginning of an ice-cream cone, some as a cloud, some as fried eggs, some as the beginning of a cartoon face. During this activity they talk about how each child saw something different and how important it is for everyone to feel like they can share their ideas and that there is no correct answer as it is all about what and how they see it.

moving, I invited the children to show me something different they did. Some children morphed into new stories while others finished the story they were on. Laila and I walked around observing the movement and thoughtfully saying things like, “Oh, that looks interesting” or “That looks like a fun activity” but not naming the children’s movement. I was aware that if we named the children’s movement we would take away children’s opportunity to form their own ideas and look at the movement through their own perceptions. I invited the children to share two more stories of what they did on the weekend and then we met back on the carpet.

Laila suggested we get the children to share their movement with each other because she had observed children being influenced by each other’s movement. Rubylyn and Chesa, in particular, had both been swimming on the weekend and had both tried different swimming movements when they saw what the other one was doing. They then began to work together trying each other’s movement. I knew that a few children in this class were not completely comfortable sharing on their own yet. Knowing this I decided that the children would form groups of no more than four children and create a group movement story which they would then share with the whole class. I instructed the children that their group story needed to have a minimum of three or four movements representing the activities they did on the weekend. I explained to the children that the reason I was asking them to use a minimum number of movements was so that everyone could have the opportunity to contribute a movement if they wanted to. However, groups could also use more than three or four movements if they wanted. I suggest that they begin by showing their group the movements they had used when they were working on their own and together choose which movements they wanted to use and to think about why they are choosing those movements.

Children formed groups and found a space in the classroom and began showing each other their movements. Laila and I observed as groups started and decided to give them time to work on their own before we checked in so that children could work out which movements they were going to use on their own. We were willing to help guide a group if the group could not decide on their movements and had first tried working it out on their own. However, we did not have to do this as groups were engaged in animated conversation about what they were going to share. One group that stood out was Richard and Ricardo: they had chosen to work in a group of two and were taking turns sharing their weekend movements. From observing their movement it was clear that they had both played video games on the weekend and so they both agreed that they would tell a video game story. Their conversation involved collaboration and compromise as they made comments like: “I like this part of yours, maybe we can put that with this part of mine.” At this point I moved on to check in with another groups but was interested to see where their story had gone as they were collaborating well with each other.

Laila and I brought the children back to the carpet to share their group stories. As the groups came up to share their stories one by one I noticed that something was slightly different about this share but I could not yet put my finger on what was. That was until Richard and Ricardo shared their story. After they were done sharing someone on the carpet exclaimed, “Oh, I get this one. It was easy.” In other words, the children could easily understand what the story was expressing. I asked Richard and Ricardo if they could tell us about their movements and how they put them together. They shared that they had four movements and the first one was them running in excited to play (see Figure 8), the second was them sitting using their hands to



Figure 8: Excitely running in to play



Figure 9: Playing a video game



Figure 10: I lost, I won

show they were playing a video game (see Figure 9), and the third and fourth movements showed that one person won and one person lost (see Figure 10). To show that Richard lost, he

slumped his body down and put his hand on his forehead; and to show that Ricardo won, he sat up really tall and pumped his fist in the air. I asked the children why this story was easier to figure out and Ava pointed out it was because “It has details.” I reframed what Ava was saying, “So, you are saying that the more details we add, the easier it is for the audience to figure out what we are trying to say.” Alejandro agreed and pointed out that “Some stories were easy [to figure out] and others were not as easy”.

Richard and Ricardo’s story was a great example of a story in which one movement flowed into the next to tell a story. During our debriefing conversation, I wondered aloud to Laila where we should go next to support the children’s development of their movement stories. I wanted to find ways to help children think critically about the individual movements and how to put those movements together to express a cohesive story. By the end of our conversation neither of us were any closer to deciding where to guide movement, so we left the conversation for the day.

Focusing on individual movements. I came to school the next day not sure where literacies workshop would go. It was a busy day so my planning conversation with Laila was a quick one. I shared that I did not want to stop children from using movement in ways that made sense, yet, I was not letting go of finding a mentor text that we could use to help the children think about how a dancer combines and connects individual movements together to tell a story. Laila, in her very calm demeanour, asked, “Does it have to be something new?” I replied that it did not have to be new. I shared with her that the children’s movement stories yesterday felt different; that there seemed to be a shift in how they were using movement and that I was not one hundred percent sure why, except for the fact that we had started creating our group stories with a set of individual movements. Laila asked if it could be due to the children’s comfort level

as we had been exploring dance and movement in literacies workshop for about three weeks. I believed that this was part of it. I shared with Laila how I found it interesting that children were becoming very comfortable using dance and movement to express their stories but the conversation had not yet focused on individual movements until now, halfway through the study. Refocusing on Laila's comments about not needing to do something new with the children, I asked her if she thought it would be beneficial to go back to the first two pieces of music we moved to and revisit children's movements and stories now that we were starting to look at individual movements and how we put them together. Returning to a favourite book or author is something that Laila does during literacies workshop as she points out that we often notice something new or see a different perspective when we reread a favourite book or author.

With this in mind, Laila and I decided to return to the first movement experience we engaged the children in, in which we used *O Fortuna* by Carl Orff and *Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy* by Tchaikovsky as our inspiration for movement and storytelling. With some concern on my part that children may not want to repeat this same movement experience as the children had been so engaged in it the first time, Laila and I gathered the children on the carpet. I explained to the children that we were going to listen to *O Fortuna* and the *Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy* again today and move and dance to the music. Richard asked if they had to tell the same story as last time. I assured the class that this was their choice; that they could if they wanted to but did not have to. Immediately Vergel, Alejandro, Richard, and Ricardo began talking about what they wanted to do. Vergel quickly claimed that he was going to be the vampire again and Alejandro stated that he couldn't remember who had been bitten first. Laila and I got the children's attention back so we could finish giving instructions and get moving. I explained we were doing this activity because yesterday we had created stories using individual movements which

depicted what we had done on our weekends. Today we were going to move to these familiar pieces of music and then come back and talk about the movements the children had used. Laila clarified, “So pay attention to the movements you are using and we will come back and share some of our movements with each other.” The children went off to find a space in the classroom and got started.

After we had moved to both pieces of music, the children were asked to gather back on the carpet to share. I reminded the children that we asked them to focus on individual movements they were using as they moved and dance to the music. I asked the class if anyone had an important movement that they wanted to share with us. Richard shared the movement he created which represented him turning into a vampire. Jasmine shared the movement of her being a fairy spreading fairy dust. Benjie shared his movement of being an army guy hiding with his weapon.

Miriam wanted to share and asked, “I could not remember my story. Can I show my new one?” I assured her that this was okay and that she was still able to share her movement if she wanted to. Because of what Miriam had said, I asked the class if anyone else found that this had been a problem and a few children put their hands up. So I wondered aloud if there was anything we could do to remember our stories. Richard told us that we could go back and look at the video I had made. I agreed that looking at a recording was a great way to remember movement stories. I asked if there was any other way we might be able to remember our stories because my camera was not always available for them to look at. Chesa mentioned that we could write it down. Again I acknowledged that this was another great idea and I asked if there were any other ways we could record our ideas. After a minute of silence, Vergel said that he couldn’t think of anything else and a few other children nodded in agreement. I asked the children if we needed to

come back to this conversation and I could bring some ideas (mentor texts) to get them thinking. Richard thought that was a good idea and that was the end of that conversation.

Children went off to work in their writing folders or continued to work on the movement story they had started the day before. Laila and I talked about what we wanted to do in light of this conversation, as the children continued working on their stories. I noted to Laila that I found it interesting that the children were not sure how to record the individual movements that made up their stories. The fact that our conversation had only now begun to focus on individual movements reassured me that children were exploring dance and movement as a mode of expression. Children were less concerned with the individual movements and more concerned with the story they were telling. Laila suggested that we show them different ways in which authors have recorded individual movements to help them gather ideas. I immediately thought of the yoga cards that have an image of a yoga pose on each card. However, because I did not want to limit their thinking to just one type of resource, I asked Laila if she knew of any books that contained movement and images of movement. We looked through our libraries and found Eric Carle's *From Head to Toe* which has art of children doing different movements and Michael Rosen's *Going on a Bear Hunt* because even though it does not have images of movement it lends itself to movement which we could then talk about recording.

Finding ways to record individual movements. The following day Laila and I had yoga cards, the book *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle, and *Going on a Bear Hunt* ready to go as mentor texts. With the children gathered on the carpet, I reminded them that yesterday we had begun to think of ways to record movements and so far we had thought of videotaping and writing the ideas down on our list. Laila and I had already pulled out the action and animal yoga cards showing movements like warrior pose and animals like snake pose. To get the children

thinking about how the cards could be used Laila invited the children to spread out around the room and I showed the first yoga pose and did not give any more instruction than “Follow the picture to make the pose.” Laila and I went through a few different poses each time using only the picture to guide the children to move into the pose. We then did the same thing with the book, *From Head to Toe*, asking the children to follow the action by using only the picture. We gathered the children back on the carpet and I asked what they thought about trying to replicate a movement from a picture. Lilibeth said, “It was so easy because we can see it.” She went on to say that we should try that too. I asked her what she meant by “we should try that too.” Lilibeth explained that we should take pictures of our movements. Alejandro agreed that we could record our movement with a picture. Richard added that yes we can use video *and* photos. The children began to call photographs of movement “poses” after exploring the yoga pose cards.

I asked the class if they could remember their individual movements from yesterday so that we could record them using photographs. Children’s hands shot up to share and one by one children came up to share one movement they thought was important from their story that we had created the day before. Laila or I photographed each movement. Richard came up to share his pose, however he exclaimed that it was hard to just get into the pose so he was going to do the movement and would freeze when he got to the part he wanted to share. So he spun in circles and when appeared to be breaking out of something and then froze, Laila snapped a picture (see Figure 11). It had become part of the routine that when we shared movements the class got a chance to try and figure out what was being expressed through the movement before the dancer or mover told us anything. Children’s hands went up to share what they thought was going on in Richard’s movement and pose. Vergel thought he was being Iron Man. Rubylyn thought he was flying and Alejandro, who had been part of Richards storytelling, exclaimed, “Oh, oh! I know!

He is turning into a werewolf.” Next Chesa came up to share her pose (see Figure 12). She was able to get into her pose without any other movement and she froze so Laila could snap a picture. Jasmine thought she was doing ballet. Miriam thought she was sprinkling fairy dust. Rubylyn wondered if she was ice-skating. Chesa let her know that, yes, she was ice-skating. After we took all the pose photographs, Laila sent the children off to work on their literacies workshop choices. I reminded the children that if they had a movement story that they were exploring and wanted to photograph the individual movements, my camera would be available. However, Chesa had other plans for the camera and she quickly picked it up to finish filming her acting story. None of the children took up the invitation to photograph individual movements and I wondered aloud to Laila whether this was a direction the children were interested in pursuing or if this was my own

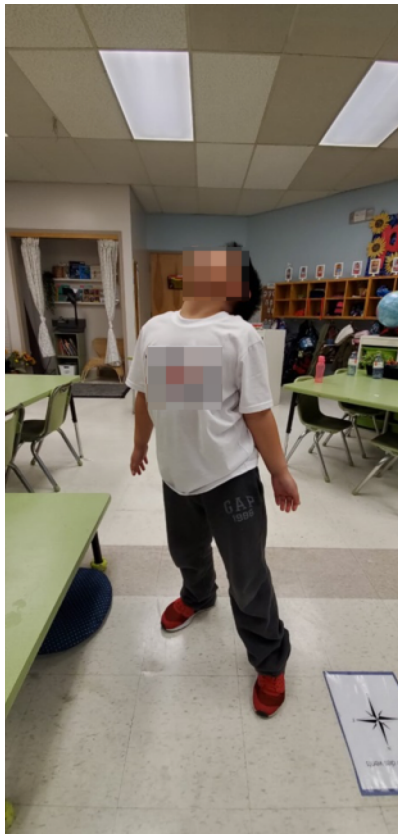


Figure 11: Becoming a werewolf

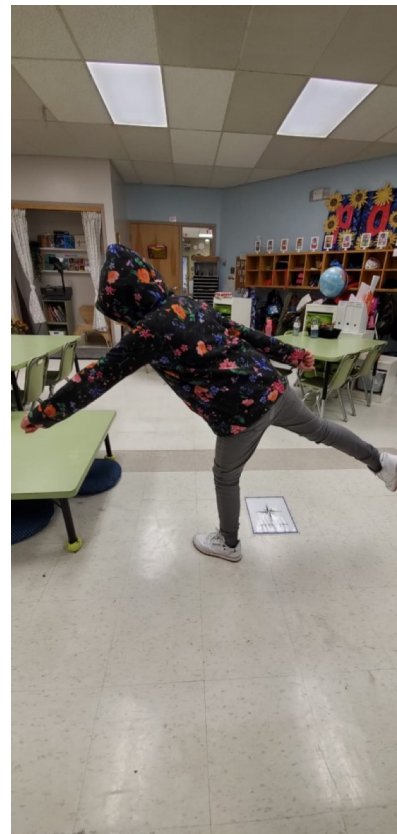


Figure 12: Ice skating majestically

agenda and something I thought was important. Laila suggested that we should give the children time and wait to see where they took the stories they were working on. Literacies workshop ended with a share that did not involve movement for the first time in a few days. This reminded me to pay attention to children, their interests, their questions, and their explorations of literacy.

I left the pictures on my camera and did not print them as children were involved in puppet stories, acting stories, and written stories. Due to the ways in which children were choosing to share their stories, it did not make sense to bring the pictures back to the children's attention. I wondered whether the conversation about how we might use individual movements to put together a movement story was over or if there would be an authentic opportunity to revisit this concept. I also wondered whether or not there would be authentic opportunities to continue exploring movement. I mentioned both of my concerns to Laila during our debriefing conversation. Laila thought about it for a while and came back to me and suggested that I print the pictures so that we have them ready for when the children are ready to use dance and movement as a mode of expression again.

I printed the pictures and left them on a table in Laila's classroom so we would have them when we were ready. The photographs sat on the table for the rest of the week, until I came in for literacies workshop and saw Benjie had laid the photos out on the table and a group of children were gathered around talking about the pictures. I could hear Benjie excitedly exclaim, "That's me, I am an army guy in a war" (see Figure 13). There was so much excitement over the photos as children jostled to get closer asking if they could see. I gathered the children on the carpet so everyone could see the pictures.

As I laid down each picture the children were guessing what the pose in the picture was supposed to be. Some of the movements were simple and easy to remember. For example, Figure 12, which depicted Chesa ice skating, Miriam immediately remembered, “That one looks like ice skating.” Some were more difficult to figure out, like Figure 11, and the children had many different ideas. Benoit thought he was, “Look[ing] up a tall building.” Vergel guessed, “You’re Superman.” Ava disagreed, guessing, “You’re Iron Man.” We all looked at Richard who replied that he wasn’t sure either because he had done so many things since this picture was taken. Laila

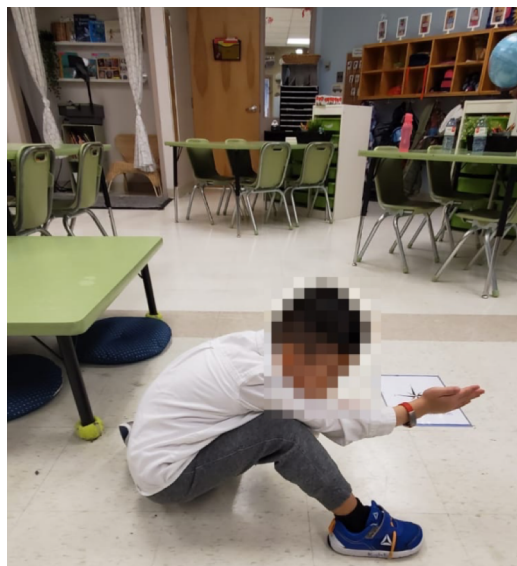


Figure 13: Benjie as an army guy

asked if this was the pose that he had spun in a circle first before he froze in the pose. Richard’s eyes lit up and he shouted, “Yes! I was turning into a werewolf!” I asked the children if they still wanted to add these pictures to the documentation wall, which had been our original plan for them. Alejandro said he wasn’t sure if we should put these up because it was so hard to figure out what some of them were. Miriam agreed and said she didn’t think we should put them up because, “We may not remember what they are.” In trying to make sure I understood what

Alejandro and Miriam were thinking, I asked, “So we don’t want to put them on the wall because the movements didn’t show the idea clearly?” Some children nodded and some children looked at me with confused looks. I tried to clarify and asked, “Does the pose have to clearly show one idea?” Children were not completely sure: some children said maybe, while others said they didn’t know. So I asked (just like I had done the last time we were not sure) if we needed to come back to this conversation and we could try some different activities to see if we could figure this out. The children agreed. Just as I was wrapping up the conversation, Richard put up his hand and said, “They need details, like when we did the weekend story, more details make it easier to know the story.” This was a great reminder for us to not forget about the details.

Experimenting with the different recording methods. Laila and I discussed various activities that we could explore to help the children think about whether a picture needed to clearly represent an idea or many ideas. I believed it would be an interesting concept to talk about because it aligns dance and movement with words. Although these two modes of expression do not work in the same way, I thought it could be interesting to see what would happen when combining dance and words. I suggested to Laila that we focus on continuing to find ways to record children’s individual movements or poses as the focus of our activities; and the concept of assigning one meaning or assigning many meanings to a movement, could be part of this conversation. I explained to Laila that I wanted children to think more carefully about recording their movement. My camera was filled with pictures of movement that children had taken and not come back to use. I wanted to find ways to help children slow down and pay attention to the poses and how they were using their bodies, and at the same time I wanted to find a way for more children to be able to record their movements. I went on to suggest that we combine Chesa’s ideas of writing down the poses with drawing (like the yoga cards). I asked

Laila what she thought about us doing an art mini-lesson to begin literacies workshop. I could bring my wooden sketching mannequins and we could do a mini-lesson on sketching people in motion. Laila agreed this would be a good way to get children to focus on the physical movement and bring their attention to how they are using their body. She shared that they had sketch books we could use so they could keep track of their sketches.

The following day when I arrived for literacies workshop, Laila had gathered the children on the carpet with their sketchbooks. I explained to the class that today we were going to try recording movements in a different way. I explained that Laila and I had been inspired by Chesa's idea to write down movement, and the yoga cards, and that today we were going to try sketching movement. My sketching mannequins were already in the classroom ready to be used. I began by manipulating the mannequins into dance poses. I asked the children to look closely at the wooden bodies. I reminded them to look at the shapes they saw and the directions the arms and legs were going. We worked on doing quick rough sketches, catching the shape without adding too much detail to begin with (see Figure 14). I explained to the children that I wanted

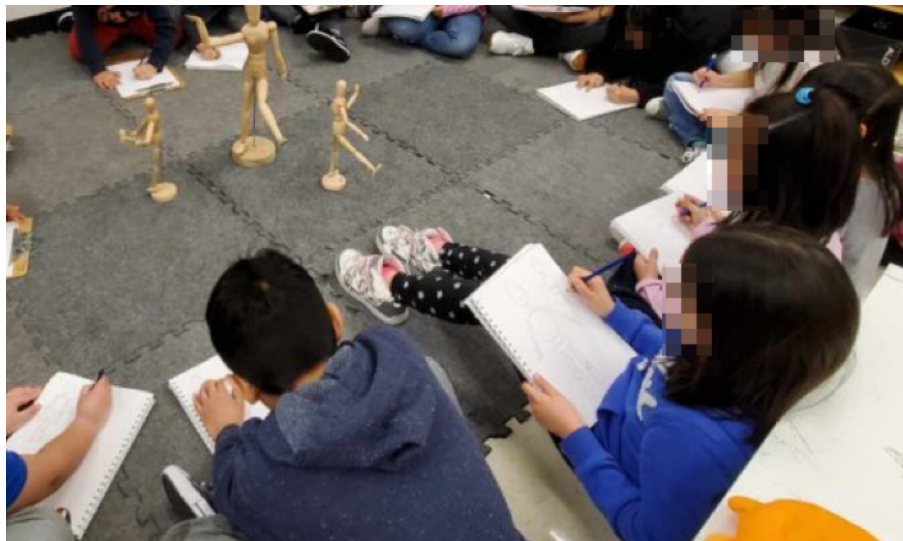


Figure 14: Sketching dance poses

them to focus on recording the shape of the movement as opposed to focus on adding faces, hair, or clothes. This was difficult to do, especially in the light of all the conversations we had had about adding detail to our stories. I hoped that this would help to see the shapes bodies were making and replicate what they saw in the wooden object and then transfer the shapes to paper.

After the art mini-lesson children went onto their storytelling choices and the mannequins began to take on a life of their own. Benoit, Vergel and Alejandro began posing the wooden mannequins in story poses to recreate the *Going on a Bear Hunt* (see Figure 15 and 16).

The mannequins told many stories, but unfortunately were not strong enough to withstand the many adventures. They began to lose hands and feet and we discovered they broke easily after too many stories. We needed another form of mannequin so I introduced the class to making people using aluminum foil. The foil people were simple to make and were easily manipulated into poses. Children experiment making their own foil people and experiment moving the arms and legs into different poses. The children began using the foil people to plan dances and to tell stories. The foil people were manipulated to copy the children's movements and the children manipulated their bodies to copy the foil people.

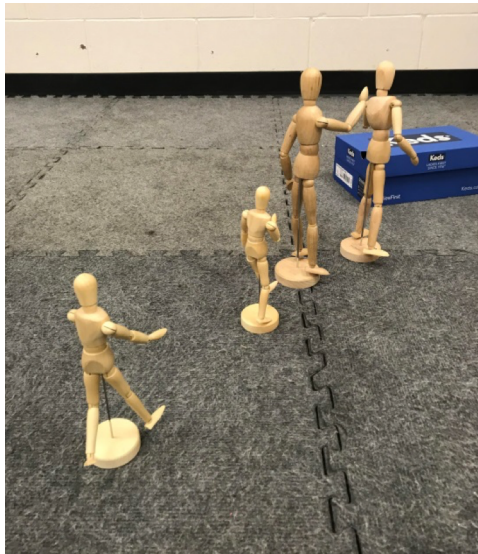


Figure 15: The mannequin family head off on a bear hunt



Figure 16: the Mannequin family go through the river

During the same week Ricardo and Alejandro had created a list of movements that they wanted to record and display on the documentation wall (see figure 17). While creating their list, they thought about adding movements their friends could use, as they wanted the pictures to help inspire stories. Ricardo shared: “We can put up poses that we can use in our stories. If people don’t know a movement they can use they can look here for ideas.” Ricardo and Alejandro did not think it was fair for only the two of them to be in all the pictures so they began to invite people from the class to come and be photographed showing in a dance pose. They decided together how each movement pose should look. Ricardo and Alejandro added emotion poses to their list when the class was talking about expressing and showing emotions through our bodies (which is described in the section below).

The children helped me to put together the documentation wall when Marisol announced, “It is like the dictionary wall. We have a French and an English one.” The children agreed. Laila came over when she heard what Marisol had said and agreed, “What a great connection this one is like a picture dictionary” (see Figure 18). The pictures became inspiration for stories and dances.

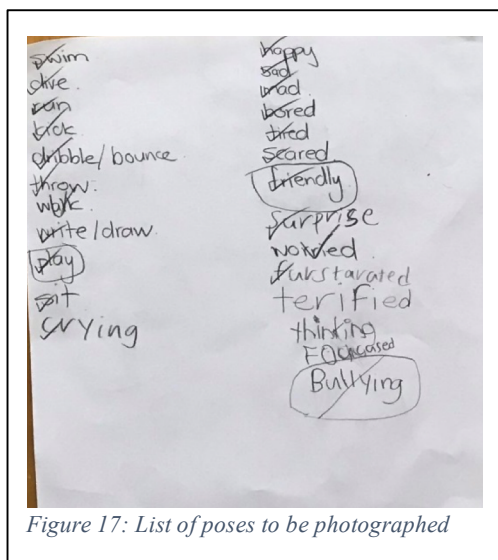


Figure 17: List of poses to be photographed



Figure 18: Picture dictionary

At the same time, Marisol had been writing her own French vocabulary book. She had been using the French word dictionary on the classroom wall as inspiration and she shared her book with the class at sharing time. Lilibeth patiently waited until after sharing time and came to tell me quietly that we should put the French words up with our pictures. She went on to explain that it was like a dictionary and so could have words too. I asked her if we could share this idea with the class and asked the class what they thought about this idea. The class agreed. Richard exclaimed that it was a very good idea and Alejandro suggested that we add the English words because I would not understand the French words. In the last week of the study the picture dictionary was filled with pictures and words as well as the foil people recording the poses (see Figure 19). Vergel shared with me as he helped me add new foil people to the wall that he thought that it was a good idea that the foil people where in the correct poses so they could pull them down and use them.



Figure 19: The picture dictionary expands

Putting our movement knowledge to use. The final week I came late to literacies workshop and the children were already working on their story choices. Ava, Jasmine, Lilibeth, and Marisol ran over to me all jumping up and down and talking at the same time. They wanted to show me what they had done, and before I could process what was going on, they had dragged me into the hallway and were pointing at a table of foil people taped in different poses (see Figure 20). Lilibeth organized the others and gave the command to start. They launched into a dance, two people at a time moving together and then switching (see Figure 21). Two girls at a time jumped, turned, and leapt in the air together. Lilibeth stopped the dance after a few movements to explain that they were dancing the foil people. I asked her to clarify and she said that they were going in a circle and following the poses of the foil people. I asked, “Are the foil people your dance plan, like is this your choreography?” Lilibeth explained that it was and gave a motion to her friends to start the dance again. This time I frantically tried to match their



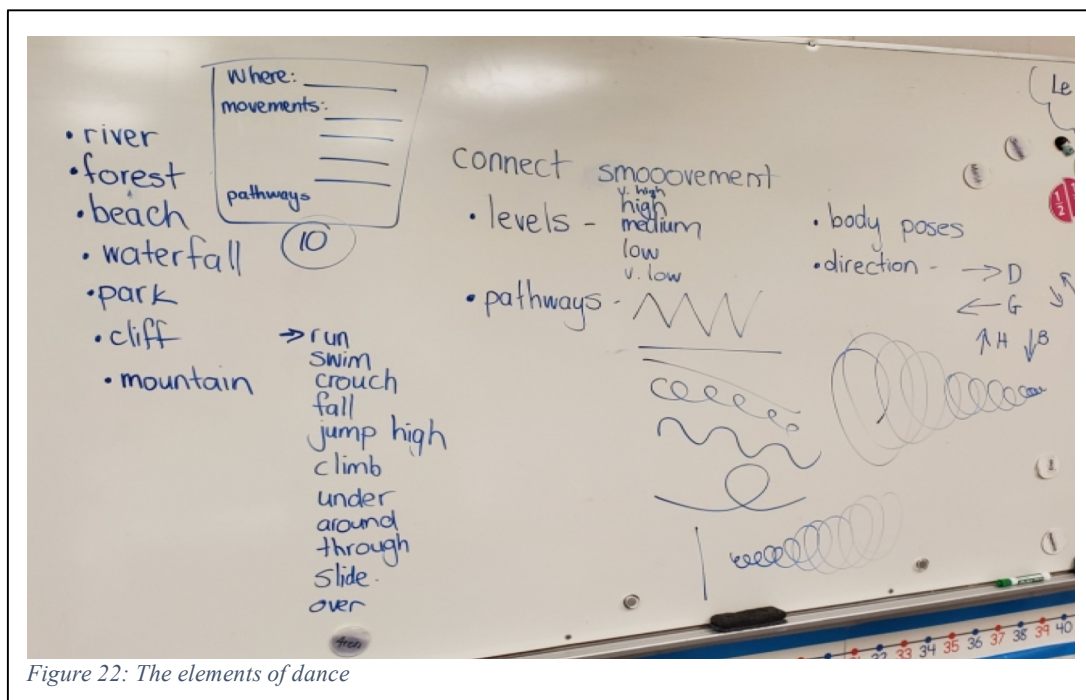
Figure 20: Foil choreography



Figure 21: The dance

movements to the foil people. They finished the dance to the applause of their peers and came over to explain that they each added three dance poses to make up their dance and if they forgot what came next, they could go over and look at the foil people. Through their dance I could see how the children were utilizing different elements of dance in their creation. They had included levels through jumping and having movement on the floor, they included both stillness and movement, they used slow and fast rhythms, and they moved in different pathways.

During my debrief conversation with Laila, I articulated my observations about how the four girls had included the elements of dance in their creation. I explained to Laila that I believe that it is important for children to know and understand the elements of dance as they are the structures of dance. This is important so that children can purposefully manipulate the structures to express their idea. For this reason I suggested that for our last mini-lesson that we go over all



that children know about the elements of dance and name them for the children. So for the final time during the data collection stage, Laila and I gathered the children on the carpet and looked

over the documentation panels creating a list of all that we had explored and all that we know about using dance and movement (see Figure 22).

During this conversation Richard so eloquently reminded us that when we experience something we understand it better. Laila and I observed the children making connections to the literacy practices we had been exploring physically as children tried ideas in their writing. Each concept that we explored through our bodies—for example, adding more detail, understanding our own and other people's points of view, including emotions and feelings, using our own experiences, having a beginning, middle, and end, or solving a problem in the story—all filtered into children's written stories.

Pedagogical Narration: Three Unexpected Stories Take Shape

Each of the narrations that follow describes a moment in time in which dance and movement impacted children's writing in different ways. Dance and movement allowed these three children to share with the class what they were capable of, their abilities, understandings and talents that Laila had not seen before. Benjie and Jasmine's talents, ideas, questions, and stories became visible through dance and movement. Whereas dance and movement helped Chesa tackle a difficult subject that had been on her mind. These narrations are meant to represent snapshots in time and all took place in conjunction with other work around storytelling and movement.

The pirate story. For this day's mini-lesson, Laila and I chose to begin with a music invitation using *Peter and the Wolf* by Sergei's Prokofiev. We chose this piece because the children had been using movement to retell the beginning, middle, and end of well-known fairy tales. Through this mini-lesson we aimed to give children the opportunity to focus on telling a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. We hoped that by creating their story through

movement would give children time to form their own ideas in a nonthreatening environment, in that no one had to commit their story to paper, so stories could change and be formed as the children moved around the room. When creating a story through movement, we reminded the children that the beginning, middle, and end did not have to be decided on when they started moving. So, through dance and movement the story could develop and children could have the ability to go back and fill in details or jump ahead to find the end. Our goal was to invite children who were comfortable with their story to share it with others. The children's movement stories would become our mentor texts and give us an opportunity to look at how different children were using movements to tell their story.

Laila gathered the children on the carpet while I got the music ready. I chose not to tell the children the name of the music as I did not want this to guide their story ideas but I informed them that today we would be using music to inspire their stories. I reminded them that we had done this before and it was going to be very similar but this time with different music. The children were instructed to listen to the music and once they heard something in the music that inspired a story or just inspired them to move, they could begin moving. I asked the children to pay attention to their stories and try to remember them because after moving to the music we were going to share our stories with each other. I invited the children to find their own space in the classroom, Laila dimmed the lights and I put the music on. Children explored and created stories as they moved around the room. As the music came to an end, I asked the children to stop where they were and slowly find a way for their movement to bring them to the floor. I told them that we were going to listen to the music again but this time we were going to stay sitting where we were so that we could play the video of your story in your head. I clarified that I wanted the children to retell the story they were creating to the music and make sure they were clear on the

details of their story. With children spread around the room I put the music on again. While the children listened many were moving their arms or legs as they retold the story in their heads, and it seemed to me as though the children could barely contain their stories within their bodies.

We could feel the room was bursting with ideas and children were not able to keep their ideas to themselves much longer. We chose to push them just a little bit further and asked them to now move to the music one last time before we shared and to try to focus on the details of what they were saying with their bodies. We chose to ask the children to hold off on sharing a little longer because I wanted to make sure that all of the children had a chance to express their story through movement. I asked them to think about how they could add details with their movement and to make sure the movement told their story. Laila put the music on again and let the children loose, and this time when I observed children's movement I could begin to see their stories: Marisol was playing a trumpet while marching forward; Vergel was climbing something steep, maybe a tree or a mountain; and Alejandro was shooting a bow and arrow towards something in the sky. It appeared that this processes had helped some of the students really grab onto the story that was developing in their heads. The energy was palpable. The children began to tell their stories to their friends as they danced around the room. I wanted to give every child who wanted to share an opportunity to tell their story and how it had evolved through this process, however, there were too many stories and we were running out of time. We quickly gave everyone a piece of white paper and asked them to draw their story so they did not forget it, and that we would share them after recess. The children collectively agreed that they should all draw a picture of what was happening in their stories when the music was loud and a picture of what was happening when the music was quiet.

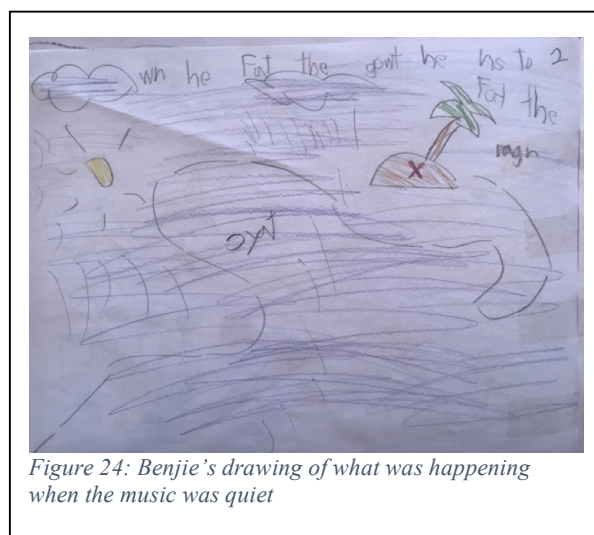
The following day, Laila and I were settling the children into their literacies workshop choices, and as usual most of the children's hands flew up because they already knew what story or nonfiction book they were ready to dig into. There were at times, however, a few students who struggled to start or who were not sure which story they would like to tell. One of these students that day was Benjie, a grade one student with a vivid imagination and copious amounts of energy. I had witnessed in previous literacies workshops that he liked to use a single piece of paper to draw a picture. When asked about his picture, he would briefly tell me what he had drawn. For example, he would often state, "It's a Beyblade battle"—just a single phrase to describe his drawing. It appeared that his sense of story was still developing and I wondered how to help him delve into his stories and give his reader some detail.

This particular day I asked Benjie what story he was going to share and how he would like to share it. He replied that he wasn't sure yet and asked if he could look at a book instead. Before Laila let him go and look at a book, she went through the list of strategies the class uses to help them get the writing process started, which does include taking inspiration from a good book, but also includes trying out what was talked about in the mini-lesson, writing about something you like, looking around the environment for inspiration, or looking in your writing folder for a story to finish. Each suggestion was met with a polite, "No thank you." After all suggestions came back with a "no," I absentmindedly passed him his pirate story drawing from the day before and suggested he add colour while deciding what he wanted to write about. Little did I know that this would be the start of something very special!

When Benjie's picture was finished he came to share it with me and we talked about what was going on in his drawing (see Figures 23 and 24). He became very animated and explained that there were two pirate ships, his and a friend's, and that his ship shot a cannon ball at the

other ship and they shot one back. Both of the pirates were looking for treasure. It was clear that he was remapping the story in his head from the day before as he was pointing to the spot in the classroom where he had begun to dance this particular part of the story. He explained to me that yes, this was where he shot a cannon at his ship, this was where his ship sank, this was where the ghost came in, and here was where he went on land to find the treasure. At this point in the explanation, he was paying no attention to the drawing and was pointing to the different parts of the classroom where he had performed the story. I looked at his two pictures and asked if all these things were happening on these pieces of paper because I was confused about the part when the ship sank and the ghost came—this was a twist I was not expecting based on the picture. I also wondered out loud whether the pirate had found his treasure. With no further conversation he took his pirate story back from me, helped himself to more white paper and walked away.

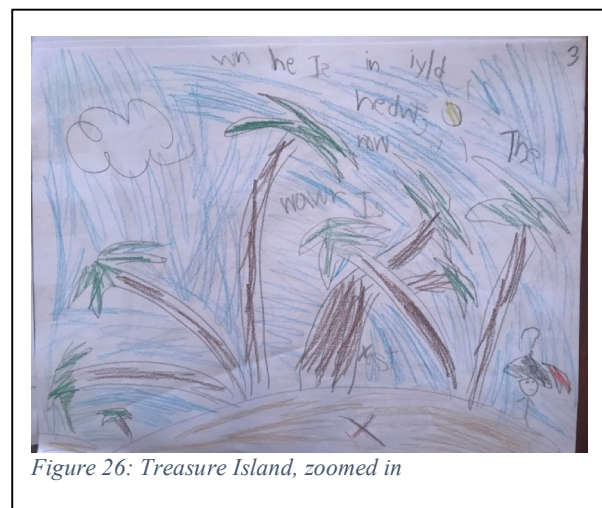
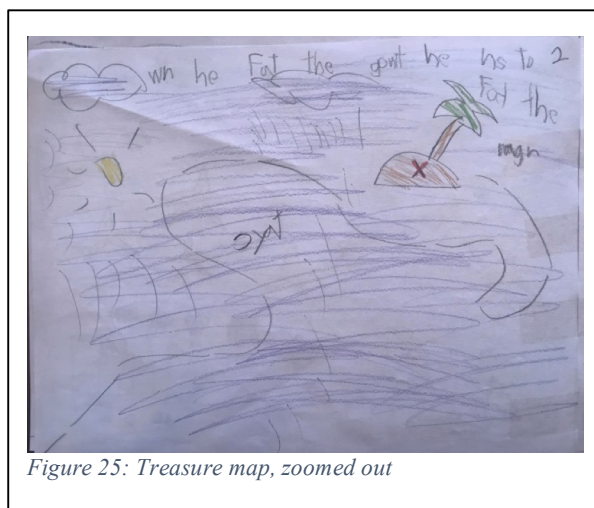
The recess bell suddenly rang, catching us all by surprise. The teacher and I caught each other's eye when looking around the classroom at the “mess” and gave each other a look as if to say, “How on earth did all that just happen in one hour?” With the children gone for recess and



the classroom finally quiet, we began to debrief what had gone on during the workshop and plan for the next day. It was then that we realized that Benjie was still quietly sitting at a table working away at his story. He did not want to stop and go outside! Was this the same child who had said no to every suggestion less than an hour ago?

Over the next few literacies workshops, Benjie's hand would be the first to shoot up to tell us his plan as he was focused on getting his story together and building his book with tape. As Benjie continued to work on this story, this book even became one of our mini-lesson mentor texts. This happened because a friend (with whom Benjie had shared his book) noticed that he was "zooming" into a section of his illustration, which helped to add more details to his story (see Figures 25 and 26). This reflected our mini-lessons on adding details to our stories, and Benjie felt comfortable allowing us to use his unfinished book as a mini-lesson text.

After Benjie finished his book he read it to the class. He held up each illustration, showing it around the circle to make sure everyone could see, and explained each page to the class: "Here the pirate is shot at other pirate and sank his ship and then he saw a ghost." When he was done his class applauded and asked if he wanted to take questions and comments. Benjie



agreed to take comments; his classmates were very supportive and proud of him and told him that his story was very good and that his illustrations had lots of detail. I told the class that this was his first book and he beamed. It was evident in that moment that he saw himself as a storyteller. The day after he shared his story he went back and independently sounded out words to add sentences to his story. I was interested to see what would happen next as the pirate story had been his focus for the week, but now that he was done, would this experience help him to write another story? Fortunately, the pirate story had not yet been exhausted and Benjie announced that he was going to turn it into a puppet story. At the time Benjie had been sitting at the table beside a student who was turning her story into a paper puppet show.

Benjie recreated each illustration using paper puppets and retold his story (see Figures 27 and 28). When he was done brought puppets to my office to share what he had done. I notice how much detail was in each paper puppet and I asked him to tell me about the pictures. He explained that he looked closely at his book! He had recreated the illustrations, but had made a few changes to the story along the way. For example, the puppet pirate had better luck with the shark as it only swam past his ship but the pirate in the the book had been attacked by the shark (see figure 28).



Figure 27: The pirate finds the treasure—illustration and puppet



Figure 28: The pirate ship is attacked by a shark—illustration and puppet

This process became an “aha” moment for Benjie, Laila, and me. Here was a student who had wonderful stories to share and was willing to share his stories orally with others. His vivid imagination was evident when he was playing, yet as adults we were struggling to bring his strengths to literacies workshop. However, we watched as something shifted for him when he was able to move, dance, and physically create this story. Through the act of movement and dance, his story was not only developed but also celebrated. He confidently created and shared his story through movement and then was more willing to putting these story ideas on paper. I believe that in allowing him to use his strengths to develop his story, he also developed confidence in his ability as a storyteller, which has continued to grow. Over the next few weeks he wrote two more books.

Expressing our feelings. Because of the children’s play with shadow puppets and their explorations of using their hands to create shadows, Laila and I decided to use a video text to share how a professional dance troop used their bodies together with props to manipulate shadows to tell a story. We hoped that the video would inspire children to explore using their

whole bodies to create shadow stories. We chose to show a video of Attraction Shadow Theatre Group's performance on Britain's Got Talent. I chose this specific video because of how the dancers use both their bodies and props to create the shapes they needed and because the shadows were used in such a way that the story was clearly understood by the audience. The actual story the dancers were telling was not why we chose this video. However, Laila and I did take time to discuss whether the content was appropriate for this class. The video was about a couple who fell in love and started a family, however the husband was a soldier and did not make it home from the war. Depending on children's life experiences this story could trigger an emotional response for them. We decided that this was a class that would be able to appreciate the story, however, we also anticipated that the children would be more focused on the very interesting ways the dancers created walking camels, turned themselves into buildings, or became airplanes with their bodies.

Laila and I gathered the children on the carpet and I introduced the video. I explained why we were watching it, stating that we were going to watch a video to get inspiration about how we could use our bodies to tell shadow stories, just like sometimes we get ideas from books maybe we could get ideas from this story too. As the children watched the video they were not at all focused on how the dancers were using shadow or dance, but were completely enthralled with the story. A few children began to verbalize what they were seeing as the dancers moved the story forward while others sat very quietly watching. Some children's comments were directed to the friend beside them, but some just commented aloud to no one in particular. Rubylyn pointed out, "They are getting married." Benjie noticed, "He is a soldier at war." Miriam asked, "Did he die?" Chesa noticed, "They are at the grave." Laila and I were intrigued by their response to the video and were interested to see in which direction the children would

take the conversation. We had anticipated many different concepts the children would possibly want to talk about, such as how the people had made some of the moving shapes, or the fact that the soldiers had guns, but what we did not think about was the fact that this video would begin a conversation about how the dance and music made us feel.

The video ended and I flicked on the lights, but you could feel a heaviness in the air and the following conversation began:

Jenni: What did you think about this video and what did you notice?

Richard: It was sad.

Benjie: It was about sadness.

Chesa: It's about life.

Miriam: It's emotional.

Jenni: I agree. What did the storyteller do to get that emotion across? (I was trying to get the children to focus on how the dancers used their bodies here.)

Marisol: They made stuff out of their bodies (YES! Marisol was taking the conversation in the direction I was hoping, but looking back, I am glad that the children had a different idea.)

Alejandro: Actually, it was the music.

Richard: *We experienced it*

The conversation continued about how we had felt while watching the video and a few children admitted that they had cried or wanted to cry when they were watching it. I talked about how feeling emotions is an important part of life and that it was okay to talk about how we feel and to cry or laugh or feel angry about things. I shared that dance often makes me feel very

deeply because I experience the power of the performers' emotions. That is why I like to use dance to express what I am feeling, and why it is an important way for me to tell my stories.

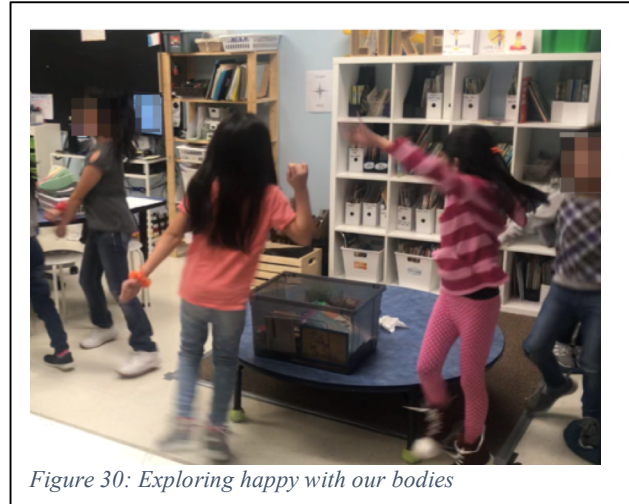
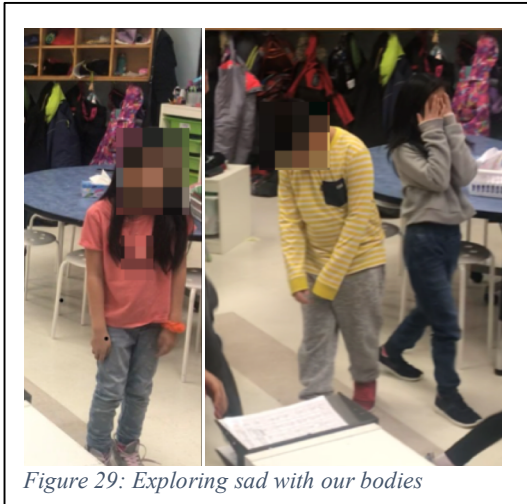
Throughout the conversation about the video I was very aware of how uncomfortable I was talking about war and death with young children, and I worried that this subject matter was too sad or scary for children. I had to remind myself how important it is to create a safe place for children to have these discussions. As exciting as the conversation was, it was equally scary: was I saying or not saying the right things? How far should I let the conversation go? I found myself, sometimes unsuccessfully, fighting the urge to push the conversation back toward the intended mini-lesson. However, as children do, they continued to talk about what was of interest to them, so I let the children continue commenting on what they noticed and how they felt about the video. Benjie acted out what the dancers had done and said, "The army guys did this and shot." Miriam asked, "Did the guy really die?" and Chesa replied, "Yes he did. Life isn't fair sometimes. It was sad." The children shared what made them sad sometimes and the conversation ended. We moved on to our literacies workshop choices. I left that mini-lesson still feeling a little uneasy, but in awe of these children's compassion and understanding.

The children went off to their storytelling choices; some children choosing to engage in writing new books or new acting stories, while others returning to puppets or acting stories they had been working on the day before. One child, Chesa, shared that the shadow story had inspired her to write a story about how life isn't perfect. Her story reflected times when she perceived life not being perfect or fair, including someone not wanting to be your friend, your mom or dad not having time to spend with you, and losing something important. She understood how the dance had portrayed the message without words so she chose to use illustrations and not words to tell

her story. She asked if she could film her story next literacies workshop and shared that it would be a story with no words.

During our debriefing conversation at the end of the day, Laila let me know that the children did not seem to be done exploring emotions. During the last recess of the day, a child had come in crying and feeling sad. Miriam made a connection to the sad feelings she had when she watched the video and so the class talked a little bit about what made them sad. Laila and I planned our mini-lesson to look at exploring other feelings through how bodies. I had left the day's conversation about feelings with a sense of unease because we had only talked about sad feelings and I felt it was important for the children to also have an opportunity to explore and talk about other feelings.

The next day Laila and I gathered the children on the carpet and I explained that today we were going to use their movement as our mentor text. I began by making a list of emotions on the board and asked the children to move around the classroom exploring what our bodies would look like if we were happy, sad, angry, frustrated, and so on. I videotaped the children as they explored the different emotions through their body. We came back to the carpet to watch the video of the children exploring these emotions with their bodies. The children noticed how their bodies changed shape, changed speed, got louder and quieter all depending on what emotion we were trying to show. For example, Jasmine said, "Happy is jumpy and bouncy." Richard said, "Sad is like bent over," and Ava said, "I skipped fast for happy." The children observed how their bodies shifted from one emotion to another. Lilibeth shared, "When I did happy I was jumpy and fast and when I did sad I moved slowly" (see Figures 29 and 30).



Our exploration of how to represent emotions continued during literacies workshop as Ricardo and Alejandro added emotions to the list of poses already on the documentation wall. This is how our emotion poses became part of our picture dictionary. The children created a list of emotions they wanted to take pictures of and I took photographs recording the children's emotion poses (see Figures 31 – 33). This idea evolved and turned into a much bigger inquiry as we explored poses with foil people, and added vocabulary in both French and English that we needed to describe these emotions in words (see Figure 33). Our conversation about whether we needed to decide on one dance pose to represent one idea was ongoing at this point and we had not yet agreed on this idea. For this reason, we explored using different emotion poses for some feelings. While the Alejandro and Ricardo were getting children to show different emotions with poses, Liliybeth suggested something different for crying; the two could not decide on which one to use, so Richard suggested they use both and added his own idea as well. Figure 33 shows the four different poses the children came up with for crying.

The following day when I came into the classroom for literacies workshop, the children were already gathered on the carpet because they had something they wanted to share with me.

Laila explained that the children had noticed when they were looking at our mentor text the

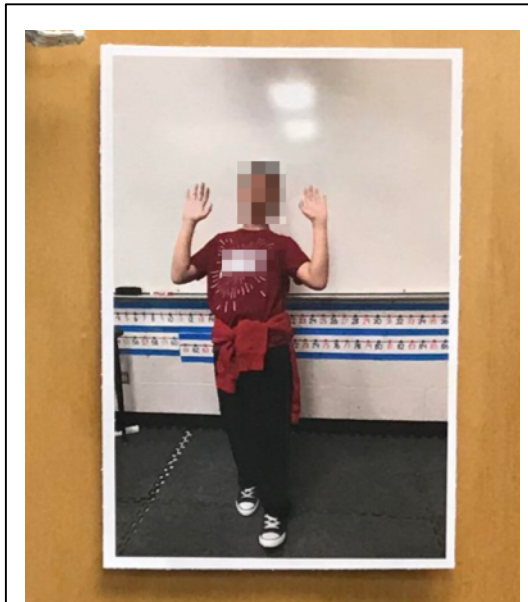


Figure 31: Showing surprise

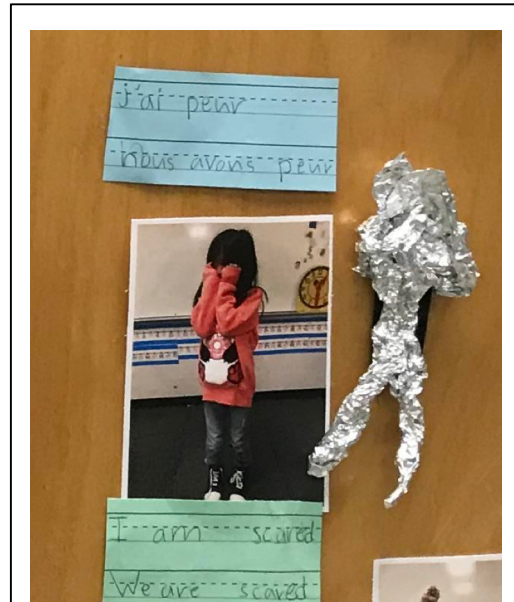


Figure 32: Showing scared

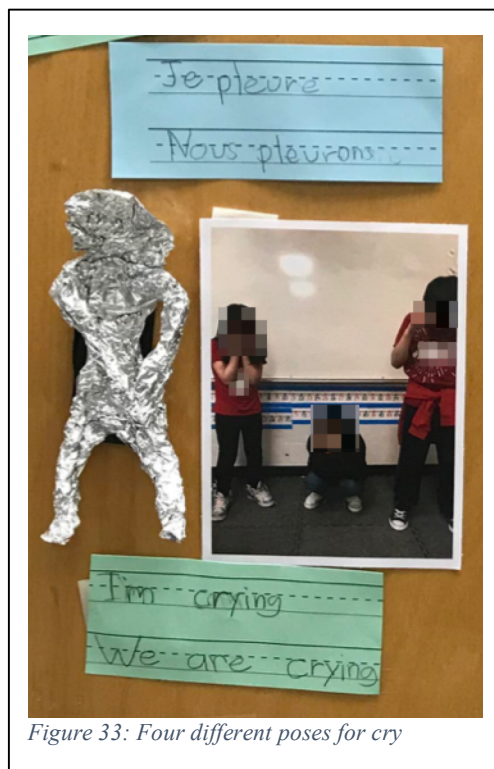


Figure 33: Four different poses for cry

illustrator used different strategies to express the character's feelings. They had found images where a character's face was bright red because he was angry, or a character's mouth was wide open because they were shouting, or their body looked bent and sad in the picture. During this discussion Richard stopped mid-sentence and rushed over to the Mo Willems book basket and brought all of the *Elephant and Piggie* books to the carpet. He explained that each book is about one emotion, so we stopped what we were doing and read through a few of them. The children started to point out how the characters in the books must be feeling based on their faces, bodies, the size of the text, and the events in the story. Emotions began to appear in children's stories in many different ways: for example, Alejandro created multiple Gerald puppets to convey the characters' various emotions. Using *Chrome Music Lab*, many children composed music to show how characters in their stories were feeling. For example, they created lively happy music when characters were celebrating. Children also explored showing feelings through their illustrations.

The example below (see Figures 34 through 37) is from Benjie's third book. He did not write this story until after we had explored the idea of sharing emotions in stories. However, this story had begun to develop in the first week of our exploration of dance and movement. He

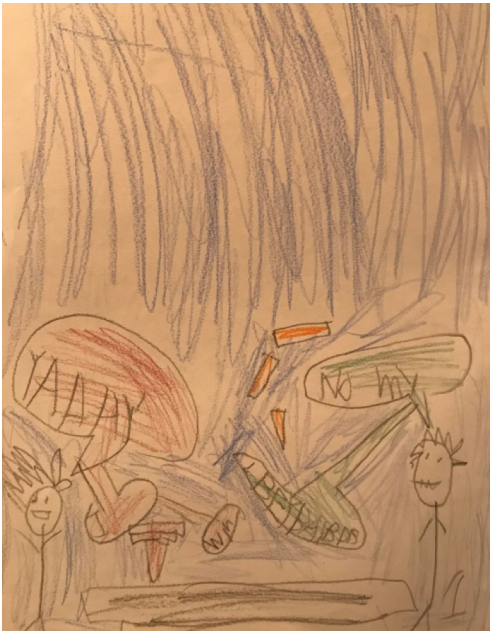


Figure 34: The battle is won—Happiness

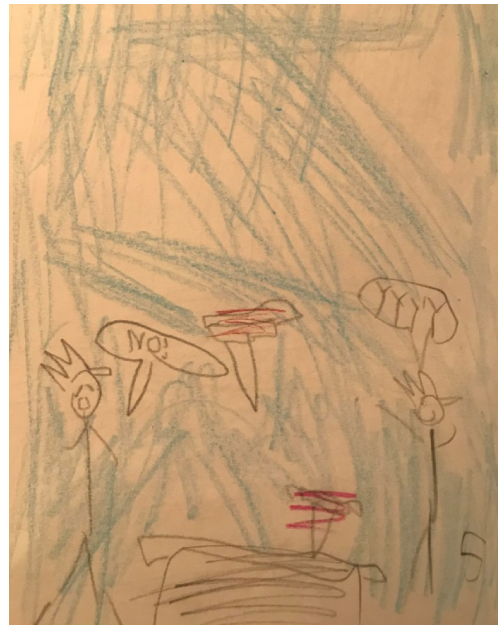


Figure 35: The BeyBlade brakes—Sadness

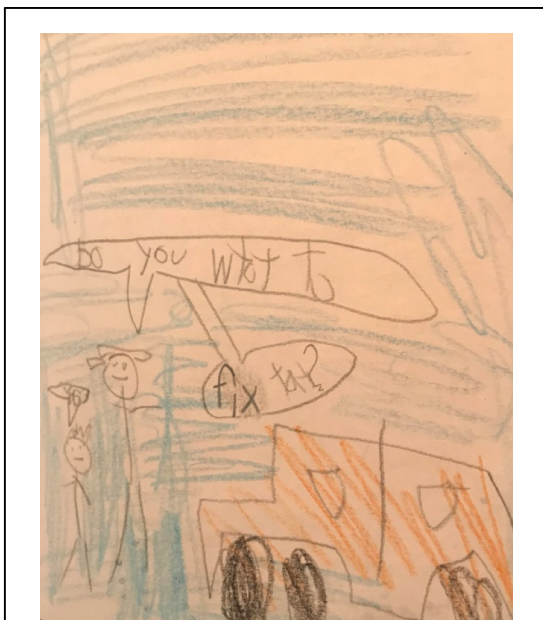


Figure 36: An ambulance arrives—Relief

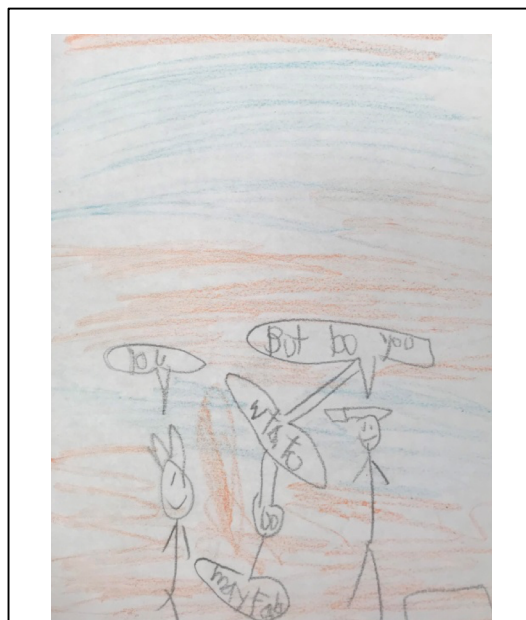


Figure 37: The fixer offers friendship—Happiness

returned to this story a few times over the course of our six-week inquiry, developing it on his own and with a friend. He based this concept on his personal experiences with his Beyblade and it is evident that he was exploring how these characters would feel when they won and when they lost their battle and their Beyblade was damaged in the process. The character on the left goes through a range of emotions as he begins happy that he won his battle (see Figure 34); only to lose the battle on the next page (see Figure 35); and get his Beyblade broken. However the story ends happily for this character, as an ambulance comes to the rescue and fixes the Beyblade (see Figure 36) and they become friends (see Figure 37).

Chesa, who had inspired this inquiry of representing emotions and who had brought our initial conversation about emotions into her writing, continued to challenge our thinking with her stories. After finishing her first story, “Life Isn’t Perfect,” she wrote a story about bullying. Again she chose to use illustrations to express emotions and had planned to film her story as a dance story. Her story tells a tragic tale—I will let an excerpt of her story speak for itself (see

Figure 38). However, once she began to work through her story physically, she came to the conclusion that dance could not tell this story in the way she wanted and that the story needed words. Once she added words, the story changed and became less tragic as the little girl no longer dies at the end. The decision was an interesting one and this was the first time she had found a limitation to using dance and movement as a mode.

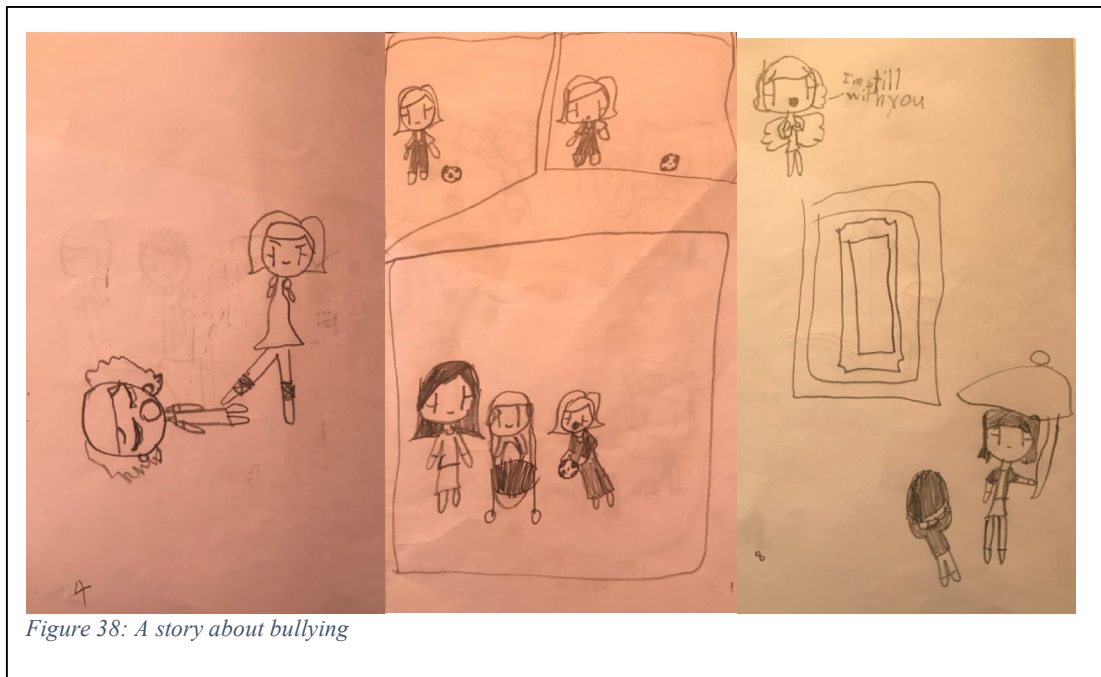


Figure 38: A story about bullying

Chesa explains, “A little girl invites two girls to play ball with her but they ignore her and keep walking. The little girl feels like no one ever wants to play with her so she bullies another girl. The bullied girl dies but still wants to be with them. The story ends with no resolution.”

Dance and movement allowed us to explore difficult topics and emotions in ways that were more manageable. I found that children were able to explore their own emotions and draw on these experiences when writing, like we saw in Benjie’s story. Children were also able to explore ideas they were worried about or that were bothering them, such as in Chesa’s story.

Finding our voice. Dance and movement became an important part of some children's day and this is not more evident than for Jasmine. Once the door to physical storytelling was opened, she showed her classmates, as well as us adults, a side to her that we had not seen before. Dance and movement allowed her to tap into her creative process and express herself in ways that she felt confident.

Jasmine's story was especially interesting to watch as it unfolded so quickly. She is a wonderful, thoughtful, kind child who is also very shy and quiet. She participated in class activities in a respectful manner but did not volunteer to share her stories, or her ideas. She rarely put up her hand during the day and when called upon she would answer in a voice that was barely audible. However, during our first movement activity where we moved to *O Fortuna* and the *Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy* (explained above) she surprised us all: her face lit up and she got lost in her movement. It was like the other students melted away as she moved her arms in strong forceful movements when the music was bold and strong. Her arm movements softened as the music calmed. She was focused on her movement and was not looking around at the other children but floated past them, matching her movements to the music; she was completely in the moment (see Figures 39 and 40). Her movement was so natural as if she was meant to move this way. She seemed to instinctively move through the different levels exploring high, middle, and low spaces as she moved to the music. There was a fluidity to her movement that enabled a newfound confidence to flow from one movement to another. Was this the same shy child who had barely spoken in front of the whole class before?

During literacies workshop Jasmine would normally share her stories through illustrations and, with support, would add words. When asked, she would in a quiet voice share her books with an adult or a trusted peer, but did not choose to share her books with the whole

class. This being said, she was not a student that I was concerned about, as she continued to develop as a literacy learner and she would often try the literacy concepts introduced during mini-lesson. I did not think that she was silenced in this classroom and she was encouraged to share her voice. However, after dance and movement was introduced to the class, we began to see her hand shoot up, wanting to share her movement with the whole class. Her classmates quickly realized that she was becoming our movement expert and would ask her to help them with their movement stories. We began to see a confidence develop, and she began engaging in group conversations adding her ideas. She took risks with her movements, trying out different ideas and showing them to others, and making suggestions for how others could move. Children wanted her to be in their stories and told her she was good at telling stories. She went on to perform in many of her friends' stories, most often opting for a nonspeaking role but completely drawing the audience's attention the minute she began to perform. She was often the most dramatic actor or dancer and she fully engaged in physical storytelling and was focused on bringing her character to life. If she was a sheep in a story she moved like a sheep, ate like a sheep, and did her best to portray her sheep character, no matter whether it might be perceived as



Figure 39: Getting lost in movement



Figure 40: Inspiring others to try

comedic or silly.

Jasmine had so many story ideas that she acted out, danced, and been a part of, that she was eventually able to translate these ideas into her own books. She was less worried about writing the words or using the correct spelling and became more focused on sharing the meaning of her stories. Being able to tell stories through her body seemed to have helped build her confidence as a storyteller. She, as well as many other children, seemed to be less concerned about “getting words wrong” and were more focused on just sharing their stories. Laila observed that the circle of children who used to always sit beside her and ask her to sound out words had decreased significantly. Children were asking less frequently if they had spelled a word correctly and were more willing to try sounding out a word or ask a friend for help rather than their teacher. Neither Laila nor I had expected our exploration of dance and movement as a means of expression to have an impact on Jasmine’s (and others children’s) confidence in her ability to tell a story. Laila believed that she saw a newfound confidence in many parts of Jasmine’s day. For example, Laila observed that Jasmine’s engagement in group work was extending beyond storytelling group work. Jasmine began sharing her ideas more frequently and thoughts during whole class conversations and confidently worked with any child in the classroom. I believe that dance allowed us to see a side of Jasmine that we would not have otherwise seen. Jasmine shared during our small group debriefing conversation at the end of the study that her favourite way to share a story was through dance and acting. I asked her how she felt about all the stories she had been a part of, and she gave me a huge smile, held her head high, and shrugged her shoulders. Ava leaned over and said, “You are the best actor.” Jasmine may not have been able to express how she felt in words in that moment but the look of pride of her face said it all.

Pedagogical Narration: The Teacher's Experiences

This research was not only about children's experiences; it was also about our pedagogical understandings as educators. The journey I took as an educator was shared alongside the classroom teacher, Laila. This section is a combination of Laila's perspectives gleaned from interviews and conversations and my observations and interpretations of our experiences together. With her help and feedback, the sections from our final interview have been edited for length and clarity.

Embodying being a learner alongside children. Throughout the study Laila and I found that we discussed ourselves as learners together with and alongside the children; meaning, we had to open ourselves to the experiences we were offering the children. In the beginning, Laila identified that she was self-conscious about participating in movement activities with the children. In our final interview, Laila reflected on how it felt to take a risk with her children and do something that was outside of her own comfort zone. Laila shared:

I am a shy person. When I first started [teaching] I was pretty shy and trying to find a balance between being the teacher and creating a caring environment. I was being nice but was I being strict enough? This year I feel like I get up and do the movement [with the kids] too. This is something I would typically be scared to do as an adult. But during movement [activities] I would think about what the kids might be thinking, does Madame look weird, but I would get up and do it and feel good about myself too for doing it with them. And they get to see me participating. This is something that teachers don't always do. . . . The kids see that I am learning too—with them. I would never have done that in the past, to get up and move with them. I would have . . . let the kids do it. But now I am doing it with them, during storytelling workshop if the kids are writing I am writing. We

are doing the same things that they are doing and there isn't that big divide—I am the teacher and you are the students and I am teaching you—it isn't like that anymore I feel. I don't feel like I am the boss and I am the one who knows everything. If I made a mistake in the past, I felt like I had to redo it and apologize . . . but now I let the children see it and say to them yes Madame makes mistakes. It is good for them to see me doing those things so that . . . they know that if they make a mistake that is okay.

In my experience as the researcher, working alongside children allowed me to get to know the children in a different way. When I sat on the floor with the children being part of the process of creating a story with them, not as the teacher, but as one of the members of the group, I was able to hear what children were think about and what they wanted to try in a different way. The children allowed me to be part of the process rather than explaining their process to me. These experiences allowed the children to be the experts and to show me what they knew: I was encouraging the children to direct their own and my learning. I believe I developed a richer understanding of who the children were as storytellers through these experiences.

Finding a balance between children's discovery and teacher's direction. Laila and I both agreed that our pedagogical dialogue helped us to push each other to take risks and explore the balance between giving children freedom to discover themselves as literacy learners and guiding their literacy learning. There was a sense of comfort in sharing learning experiences with a colleague who was also eager to explore and question with me. Together we worked to create a relationship in which we both felt comfortable sharing our thinking, asking difficult questions, and taking risks with new ideas. One of the factors that I believed contributed to our successful working relationship was our willingness to listen to the children and to be responsive to their ideas and questions. Laila and I took advantage of the opportunities that arose to introduce

different modes for children to express themselves. We agreed to be attentive to which children where engaged in each mode and in what ways we could continue supporting and challenging the children's learning.

During our final interview Laila described her reflection on the diversity we observed:

[The children] don't see it [the classroom] as teachers and children separate—but everyone is equal and no one above. It has reminded me that not everyone learns in the same way and how important it is to have diversity in my teaching to meet everyone's needs. Once children have found their creative outlet another side of them starts to show and that has started to ... [What surprised me the most was] when the kids would go off during writer's workshop and start working on their own, I would just sit there and look. They were all doing something different—some kids are videotaping, some kids are writing, some kids are using mannequins, some kids are outside [in the hallway] practicing to film theirs. It looks crazy, but they are so focused, and in that moment, I stop and go, "Wow!" I almost can't believe this is how far they have come that they don't need me to help them—to give them direction all the time.

Towards the end of the study Laila reflected, after a particularly busy and diverse workshop, on how she used to often have a line of children waiting for her help. However this was not what she was experiencing anymore during literacies workshop. She thought she was spending more time engaged in dialogue with children about their stories, supporting children's storytelling, or working on her own story alongside the children. This felt different as the children did not need her to give them directions all the time. She noticed that when they needed someone to help with a movement piece, a puppet or an acting story they would just go and ask someone. She observed that her students were being very selfless; if they saw a classmate who

needed help, they would put their own story on hold and go to help them. Laila and I observed that these new ways of seeking out peer help was supporting children's development into independent and more confident storytellers. During the children's uninterrupted writing or story creation time children did not need as much adult support to gather ideas. If children were struggling to get started they would walk around the room and observe others to see which modes they were using and gather inspiration from the tools that were available to them in the classroom. For example, the puppets or shadow area could inspire a child to uncover a story idea. Children began planning which mode they were going to use before they even came to literacies workshop and would tell Laila before she could ask what they had already planned for storytelling workshop. Through our multimodal storytelling the children knew who in the class were experts in different modes and sought help from those children before coming to adults.

Laila commented on how incredible this had been to see and was reflecting that it was hard to explain to other teachers the changes that were happening in her class unless they saw it. Layla attempted to explain the changes she was seeing:

Kids who used to hate writing and spelling and were easily discouraged—who took a long time and lots of effort to write or even draw pictures—are now writing books. It wasn't a struggle to do and it wasn't hard for me to ask them to add more detail or sound out the word. Once we started using video cameras for storytelling it got them so excited. They got excited about storytelling so the hard work they had to put in to write the story didn't seem so bad. [They have the] freedom to do things more independently and when we are having classroom discussions the language they are using is incredible. I didn't expect them to know some of these words or think about these big ideas, but of course it makes sense when we allow them the freedom to do things independently and let them

bring their true selves to the classroom. There is no judgement, there is no, “you are doing it wrong.” They are just being themselves and that has helped them to feel more comfortable. I see this change throughout the day.

I too had observed these changes and felt that Laila had handed over ownership of their storytelling to the children and therefore they were taking on the responsibility to find what they needed. They also did not hesitate to come and ask us adults for things that their classmates could not supply for them.

Taking risks in our learning. I observed that Laila allowed herself to be vulnerable and let the children see a different side of her. Just as she asked her children to, she took this opportunity to take risks and open herself up to all the same experiences the children were having. In one of our planning conversations, we pondered how we could ask the children to take a risk in their learning if they did not feel like this is a safe place and how we could ask them to take a risk if we as the adult did not. We decided that for the classroom to be a safe place for children, this meant that we as adults needed to cultivate an environment where making a mistake was seen as a learning experience within the multiple ways to share stories. Laila and I worked to create an environment where children supported each other’s attempts. This happened over the six weeks as before each sharing time Laila or I would ask reflective questions such as: how the children wanted their peers to act when they were sharing; what kinds of comments they wanted hear about their own stories; how they would want someone to give feedback that makes them think critically about their story; and what kind of audiences they want to perform to.

Another important factor to creating an environment for the children and the adults to take risks was the understanding that we were not going to be able to answer all of our questions, and that it was okay to say we did not know but we would find out.

During our final interview, Laila and I reflected on the changes we had witnessed within her classroom community and on how the classroom felt like a safer place to take risks. Laila also reflected on the connections children were making between all the different parts of their day. This became clear to Laila when Benoit made a connection between their school day and the stories we had been exploring and creating. He pointed out that their school day had a beginning, a middle, and an end just like the stories they were telling had a beginning, middle, and end. Benoit went on to say that the school day was like a story. This “aha” moment opened up a window into the children’s thinking and we began paying attention to the connections the children were making across and with other subject areas and aspects of schooling.

Effects on the classroom community. Over the final weeks of our debriefing conversations, Laila began to describe an overall shift in her classroom community. One area in which Laila had observed a dramatic change was in how the children worked together during group work. Laila articulated that when children worked in groups most often a grade three student would take on a leadership role. The grade three would take charge of assigning jobs or making sure everyone had the supplies they needed and then talk their group through their activity, and the younger children in the group would follow. This began to shift during our movement group work. The first time we created movement stories in groups, I noticed that the groups were not moving forward with a story as the grade ones and twos sat looking to the grade threes to tell them what to do. Laila and I moved from group to group reminding them that everyone could share movement. With each new experience working on movement stories in groups, children began to share more and more and groups no longer appeared to have only one leader.

The children had become a closer group who seemed more comfortable and supportive of one another. Laila shared that she was pleasantly surprised to observe that this shift could be seen throughout the day and not just during literacies workshop. This concept became clear to her one moment when the children were answering a math question (which was their lunch time dismissal routine). This was a routine they had done a hundred times but this time she noted it felt different. A young grade one student stepped up to answer his question and the rest of the class began to support him with encouragement and little hints to help him figure it out. It was clear they were not trying to give him the answer but to help him figure it out for himself. The entire class was there for him and if he got it wrong the class encouraged him to try again and reassured him that they all made mistakes sometimes, even Madame. When he got the correct answer on his own the entire class cheered in support. He was so proud of himself. It did not matter whether he could figure out the right answer or not but that was willing to take a risk and try. This had grown gradually over the weeks and struck her in that moment that this was the new norm in their class. She reflected on how her class had always been kind and supportive to one another, but this felt different—they seemed invested in each other's learning.

Effects on other area of learning. We began to notice children's use of movement throughout the day to explore other curricular areas, other than storytelling. One student in particular who was very comfortable exploring his world through movement and who was especially interested in their explorations of the solar system was spinning in circles bumping into everything in the hallway. I happened to hear the commotion from my office and when I came out to investigate what was going on, he explained that he was being a planet, he was spinning in his orbit. I was very impressed with his movement, however, I explained that the hallway was not the place to be a planet spinning in orbit.

This did, however, give me an idea and I asked him if he would like to help me with the movement warm-up the next day. We could all move like the different planets in the solar system. This activity, which was intended as a warm-up, opened up new learning about the planets because the children experienced how they thought they would move. We explored what an orbit is and its shape, we explored how the planet closest to the sun would move very differently compared to the planet furthest from the sun, and we explored how what the planet was made of would change how it moved. This warm-up sparked a new interest in using the books children had written as whole class movement invitations. We experienced moving like sea creatures, like tornados, and we went on bear hunts. Because of the children's interest, movement and dance began to become a way to explore ideas and concepts the children were learning about throughout the day.

During our final interview Laila reflected on the children's connections:

There are so many little . . . [connections] that I can see here and there it is really exciting to see. I think back to my old writer's workshop . . . I struggled because I didn't know how to make it exciting [and engaging]. The only times I found it exciting was when I found a really good book to base writer's workshop on. But this has taken it to the next level of storytelling. They love to write and they love to create stories because we have given them the chance to get up and experience it. They are not just sitting listening to us explain to them . . . what it should look like . . . they are actually moving—doing it themselves. To them it makes sense and they bring all the stuff that they learned into other aspects of the classroom. Sometimes I don't even notice [the connections they are making throughout the day] until I step back and really look at them. They . . . show . . . they are making sense of the what we have been doing. They themselves have found

meaning without us forcing them . . . it has gone way further than what I experienced before.

Final Reflections

Laila's final reflection on our six weeks describes how this process has allowed her to see a side of children that she would not otherwise have known was there. This experience has allowed a few children to express themselves and has therefore allowed Laila, as their teacher, to see what they are capable of. The inclusion of dance and movement influenced her understanding of the children as meaning-makers and therefore changed how she viewed these children's abilities, what she expected from them, what she knew they are capable of, and even changed how she wrote about them in report cards. At the same time, she believes that this experience has allowed the children to see her as a "human being" and not just their teacher.

During our final interview Laila reflected on the positive experiences and changes that she had observed and experienced:

I have really appreciated this experience—it has helped me to think and write critically about my students and my practice. Meaning is number one in my mind all the time—what is the purpose of this for the kids? . . . If the purpose is to fill time, then is it worth it? I think more deeply about these things now. My pedagogy is not set in stone and it is developing—there has to be change—I'm always trying to be better. All the pedagogical dialogue we have had [during this study] has helped me to reflect! I think about it a lot now, but before, I was teaching to survive . . . trying to make it through the day. Without that [pedagogical dialogue] I wasn't thinking about trying something new in the classroom and taking a risk of my own.

I go home and think about how this can be used in math; how can this move into explorations. I do more reading and search for more ideas. This helps me to push my thinking as a learner and as a teacher. I have realized how important our professional dialogue is to growing.

Laila shared that the positive outcomes she saw from including multimodal literacies encouraged her to think about how she would continue this work next year with her multiage class:

This is something I would continue. I am lucky [having multiage] because some of them will just get it already and so next year when I reintroduce it there will be so many people to help the new kids. They [the older children] will lead by example and the younger kids catch on quickly. I think it will be a good thing to continue. I don't know how it will look next year but I can already hear them asking me, "When can we video tape? Can I do it this way? Can I do shadow puppets? Can I do this, can I do that." I can see them asking to do everything we have already done this year for new stories. It is just a part of our day now – it isn't a question. For the most part they look forward to it, and if it is not on the board in our schedule they ask me about it. If there is explorations, instead they ask if they can continue storytelling. I see the young children who needed time to play in the past, now when there is free time or down time ask if they can read the books the class has made or if they can just do writer's workshop.

The pedagogical dialogue with Laila and the experiences I had in this classroom alongside these children have pushed me to keep thinking critically about why these experiences were so rich and meaningful to the children and to us as teachers.

Chapter 5: Theorizing the Narrations

The participants of this study have lived out literacy experiences that have allowed me to examine how an early years classroom literacies workshop could be transformed through the inclusion of dance and movement as a means of expression and meaning-making. Although my research focused on our experiences within dance and movement, the stories in the findings demonstrate an exciting richness that is truly multimodal. The term *smoovement* coined by the children speaks to this; they could not separate sound and movement in certain situations. Music, dance and movement are hard to separate as the structure of the music influenced the structure of the movement, which in turn influenced the structure of the story. Literacies workshop during the six-week study was a multimodal experience with stories being shared in multiple ways.

I witnessed the ways in which the children lived “storied lives” (Short, 2012) and that they shared who they are through our stories. Therefore, it was important to me to create a space in which all children could find their preferred way of sharing stories in the classroom, and for some children this is through movement. Shapiro (2008) posits that dance and movement allow children to share themselves in ways that are “visceral and far less mediated by our thoughts and abstract conceptualizations. It provides, at times, a raw, embodied way of capturing human experience” (p. 254).

I chose to use story as a way of framing the findings of this study as stories enabled me to share the unfolding construction of meaning in the classroom. In reflecting on these stories three important observations surfaced. The first relates to children’s engagement with dance and movement. I was intrigued by the engagement of the children when the teacher and I introduced dance and movement mini-lessons for literacies workshop. Secondly, I was surprised by the unexpected impacts that including dance and movement seemed to have on individual children,

as well as the classroom community. The third important observation is how the inclusion of dance and movement has had a transformative effect on our respective pedagogical questions and conversations, as well as our perspective on some children and who they are as meaning-makers.

Engagement amongst the Children and the Teacher

As teachers, we are critically aware of how introducing something new, especially a concept in which children are asked to take risks, can cause apprehension and anxiety for some students (and maybe even the teachers). Laila shared some of her concerns with me before the study began, stating, “I am worried about a few individual students as some of them do not like attention on them, so I worry that this could be an experience that creates more anxiety for these students.” Laila worried that some children would not want to participate in the dance mini-lessons because they might not have felt comfortable. This was a legitimate concern especially when the norm is to not make space in our classrooms for children to use their bodies for making meaning. As Sansom (2011) reminds us, activities that involve body and touch can create a sense of uneasiness among adults. However, Martin et al. (2018) and Richard (2017) share that in their experiences all the students that they have worked with have enjoyed dance and were engaged by it. Martin et al. even go on to say that “none of us could recall one student who did not ultimately respond positively. Not one.” (p. 164). Armed with this knowledge Laila put her trust in me and in the research and embraced dance and movement as a mode of literacy.

Throughout the study, Laila and I found that the individual students whom she had been concerned about became leaders in movement conversations. Rather than filling children with anxiety, dance helped these children show us their capabilities as storytellers. Laila and I observed each and every child in her classroom participating in all dance and movement mini-

lessons, helping to make the engagements rich and meaningful encounters. When the children shared their dance and movement experiences with peers, every child shared their ideas both in large groups and small groups. This level of engagement was of interest to me as this was not always the case when sharing at the end of literacies workshop. When literacies workshop involved just writing, there were children in this class who were not comfortable sharing their stories in large groups. What really surprised both Laila and me was the children's excitement to continue exploring dance and movement activities after whole group mini-lessons were complete. Logue et al. (2009) reminds us that when we build curriculum beginning with children's interests and strengths it allows them to become insiders to the thinking process. By listening to children and allowing their ideas and interests to guide where Laila and I directed the dance and movement mini-lessons, I believe children were invited to become insiders into the literacy processes. This study situated dance and movement within multiple modes of literacy, giving children permission to use the "knowledge their bodies understood but hadn't been invited to use in school" (Richard, 2017, p. 76).

Dance and movement occur in a socially and culturally shaped space and children need to have an understanding of the socially agreed upon structures in order to create a dance or movement piece that is easily understood by the group. As the children and the adults explored dance and movement as a means of expression and meaning making, we made decisions on what was meant by certain movement texts, what it meant to add music or sounds, what it meant when movements were performed slowly or fast, and what it meant when there was a period of stillness between the movement. Over time we developed an understanding and accumulated knowledge of what others had done in different dance and movement texts and this knowledge was drawn from when children created their own dance or movement texts. The class also

developed an understanding of how different children used movement to express themselves and how they integrated other modes to attempt to influence the audience into feeling and seeing what was important. Our class discussions about children's perceptions when understanding dance and movement played an integral role in building structures or rules for using dance and movement. Children understood that our own experiences influenced how we interpreted and understood dance and movement stories, therefore they kept in mind how their classmates may interpret their movement stories and used those predictions as a part of their design.

The Unexpected Impacts of Dance and Movement

The inclusion of dance and movement not only supported individual children's learning but also influenced the classroom community in unexpected ways. Laila articulated a few changes in her classroom community that she believed were related to our work with dance and movement during literacies workshop. One change Laila pointed out had to do with group work. Laila stated that, prior to the beginning of this study, she observed that the older children in the multiage setting took on the role of the leader during group work. In cases where there were two grade threes in one group, the children would decide which grade three student would be the leader. After exploring dance and movement stories for a few weeks, Laila and I both noticed that when the children worked in groups, storytelling was more equitably democratized among all of the group's members regardless of grade level. During dance and movement mini-lessons, we would often start with independent movement explorations and then break off into groups; therefore, every child came to the group with movement ideas that they could share. Children became excited about each other's ideas and were often heard encouraging each other, telling others their ideas were good ones or sharing their expertise with each other. When working together on dance or movement stories it was not out of the ordinary to hear a children shout

their enthusiasm for someone's idea. When creating a dance or movement story it is important that children were able to rely on all of the people in their group to create the full picture intended. Working with their peers with and through movement gently taught children to be physically present and that they could rely on others to physically be where they need them. Creating dance together seemed to empower children to become aware of and comfortable in their own physical space while also being comfortable working in close proximity to others. Moving together as a group appeared to help children be more aware of their space throughout the day. Sometimes movement requires children to use the body weight of others or create shapes using more than one body. Creating movement stories encouraged children to work together for a common goal. Laila began to see this supportive behaviour throughout other parts of the day and it gradually became her classroom's new way of being.

The supportive environment continued to develop over the six weeks we explored dance and movement together. It is important to be clear that this class was not generally unsupportive of each other, but the way in which children were supporting each other had shifted. Laila observed children putting their own projects on hold to help a friend who needed an extra dancer, puppeteer, or writer during literacies workshop, but it was more than this. Small moments of children supporting each other were popping up throughout the day in math, explorations, at recess. The support for one another was never more evident than during a sharing time when Jasmine who did not often choose to share eventually decided to share with the whole group. Isenberg and Jalongo (2001) argue that dance and movement provide a mode through which some children are able to demonstrate their confidence and their intelligence. This was clearly evident in Benjie's story, and through the movement he was able to create and share his stories. When I asked Benjie on the last day of the study how he felt about writing his very first book

(referring to the Pirate book) he looked at me with surprise and informed me that he had already written three books now. He has grown into a more confident storyteller who still returns to physical storytelling when he is beginning to create a story and then confidently shares the story through illustrations and words. I believe that creating his story through movement enabled Benjie to gather his ideas and form the story he wanted to put in words, as he has shared that he creates his stories with dance but then he writes them. Benjie is not the only child who has demonstrated confidence through dance and movement. Jasmine has shown her strengths, talents, and confidence through her dance, movement, and any kind of physical storytelling.

Dance and movement have been utilized by and supported the development of all children in this classroom from those whose have difficulty accessing traditional literacies and those who do not. Dance and movement should not be seen as only a tool to help children find their way to reading, writing and speaking but should be valued for what it brings to communication. Through our bodies, we are able to explore, scrutinize, and convey ideas and feelings that may be difficult to talk about or difficult to express in words (Cancienne & Snowber, 2003; Hanna, 2008). Dance and movement can therefore help make sense of experiences and help children to understand information and ideas differently. Through dance and movement we are able to “integrate sensory information, thought, emotions, and actions to assign meaning to experience” (Dils, 2007, p. 97). I was surprised at the heavy subject matter that was explored in this early years classroom. I believe that dance and movement gave Chesa a safe way in which to explore the idea of bullying and suicide without needing to put her thoughts into words.

Pedagogical Influences

There have been many ways in which the inclusion of dance and movement have shifted and challenged both Laila's and my pedagogical understandings about literacies workshop. This study has been as much about our own learning as educators as it has been for the children. The restructuring of literacies workshop was an ongoing conversation between the two of us. When considering what needed restructuring we began with what was working and then looked at how we could rethink and reimagine her workshop. Restructuring did not involve changing the basic format (or structure) of the workshop, however, we restructured the modes in which mini-lessons were conducted, including oral stories, music, videos of professional dance, videos of stories created by the class, and of course books. By shifting the mode through which we shared a literacy concept or practice we open children to new and different ways of understanding that literacy practice. This in turn led to children exploring different ways of using these literacy practices in their own storytelling and meaning-making. Isenberg and Jalongo (2001) posit that the "connection between movement and understanding is so strong that when children are asked to physically rotate their bodies, they are then able to understand the mental concept of rotation" (p. 160). For example, when children were asked to embody the literacy concept of beginning, middle, and end of a story we saw children connecting this concept to other parts of their day as well as to their stories.

The inclusion of dance and movement has had a profound impact on Laila's and my understanding of the children's talents and capabilities. Through the inclusion of dance and movement children were able to show us parts of themselves that we had not yet seen. Children were able to demonstrate their understanding in ways they were not doing through traditional literacies. For some children, dance and movement supported their development of confidence in

themselves as literacy learners which then allowed them to begin to take risks in writing. Giving children the ability to share their knowledge and understanding in ways that are comfortable to them shifted both Laila's and my perception of students who had previously been seen as successful or struggling with literacy. Laila shared with me that through the inclusion of dance and movement into her literacies workshop she felt she was able to better get to know her students as literacies learners, and that this process had even changed how she assessed and reported on children's growth.

Throughout this research I have been purposeful about my placement of dance and movement within the research literature as I have worked to position dance as a valuable mode of literacy because of the unique structures and qualities it brings to communication. Dance and movement do not need to be equated to "traditional literacies" (Serafini, 2014) in order for it to bring value to our literacies workshop. We only need look at the stories shared in the literacies workshop to know what dance and movement as a means of expression and meaning-making are able to offer. I believe that dance allows for a freedom from the formal structures (and sometimes pressures) normally associated with traditional literacies. Dance creates opportunities where children are able to physically experience, connect to, and share a story or a concept in the absence of language's structure.

The development of the children's exploration of dance and movement took many unexpected turns and this was due in part to the fact that dance was accessible to the children as well as the teacher. Martin et al. (2018) reminds us that in order for dance to be commonplace in classrooms we first need to demystify the artistry. From previous experiences using dance and movement I anticipated that some children would want to hold onto the connection between language and expression and that this would lead them to focus on specific movements,

assigning them to specific words. For example, the movement of stretching and yawning could be assigned to mean tired. About half way through the research I reflected on my interest in children connecting movement to words. I questioned why this concept was important to me and asked myself if I thought it would give my research more meaning within literacies workshop? Looking around the classroom as children engaged in dance and movement as a means of expression I was able to see how this concept was already integrated into their storytelling and did not need to be brought to the forefront as a focus. As a teacher it is important to continue thinking critically about my practice and to be aware of my own preconceptions and how these might stand in the way of children's experiences.

I believe that dance and movement need a place at the multimodal table where dance can be used together with multiple modes for expression and meaning-making. This study aims to challenge the dominant understanding that traditional literacies are the most important way to express ourselves in school. I argue that dance and movement can be a powerful tool for children to address difficult subjects, to share their voice and their stories, and to cultivate positive identities as learners.

Chapter 6: In Closing

I return once again to where it all began with the metaphor from Malaguzzi's (1998) poem, *No way. The hundred is there*. I returned to this poem throughout the process of documenting my research and the final line stands out more now than it ever has before: "The child says: No way. The hundred *is* there" (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 3). The children's engagement with dance and movement throughout the six-week study demonstrates Malaguzzi's thought. The children willingly took up the opportunity to express themselves in multiple ways. Dance and movement became an important way for some children in this classroom to communicate and express their identity and make meaning of the world in which they live. Sansom (2011) argues that dance and movement can stir up the imagination of both teachers and learners, and reconnect us with our bodies and bodily learning as we open up an additional way to understand and analyze our own life experiences.

Dance and movement were brought in from the outskirts of the curriculum into the centre where it was visible and accessible for children. Dils (2007) posits that dance needs to be understood as part of a broader and embodied experience which can become a "system of representation that offers many possibilities" (p. 96) for expression and communication. This requires teachers to pay attention to which literacies are valued and made available for children in our curriculum and in our classrooms. In order for this to happen, teachers need to envision what literacies can be, and to include different modes, texts, and ways of being understood.

Dance and movement helped the classroom teacher and me to find ways to create authentic learning experiences and celebrate the interconnectedness of these learning experiences. Sansom (2011) argues that dance allows us to empathize with the experiences of and feel more interconnected with others. No matter what we are teaching or learning when

knowledge is embodied we come to a deeper understanding of the concept (Snowber, 2012). I believe that when we open our classrooms to the metaphorical “Hundred Languages” of children that Malaguzzi (1998) talks so eloquently about in his poem, we give children the agency and power to show us who they are and what they know in ways we may never have dreamed of before.

This study contributes to the argument that dance and movement should be a part of children’s experiences at school. More specifically, that dance and movement should be offered to children as a means of expression and a way in which children are able to make meaning of their world around them. This research, however, pushes the use of dance and movement away from being equated with language and into the field of multimodal literacies. Through the powerful stories of the children, dance and movement have been shown in this study to have an important role as a mode of expression. Through this research I aim to share the value dance and movement had for children in order to encourage the use of dance and movement as a means of expression and meaning-making in the classroom. Dance and movement have enabled children to experience literacy practices through their bodies, which helped children to understand these practices in a different way, contributed to the classroom community, enabled children who struggle with traditional literacies to share in ways that are comfortable for them, and allowed children to show us what they know and who they are in alternate ways. The significance of this research is that it contributes to the pedagogical understanding of the impact of dance and movement for young children in school. I believe that it is important for research to continue in the area of dance and movement as a legitimate mode of expression for literacies workshop.

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January 28, 2019

Dear Room 14 Parents/Guardians,

I am writing to share information with you about a research project that I am pursuing. I am currently working towards my Masters of Education degree at the University of Manitoba and this research will be part of the required thesis for my degree. The research is being conducted under the supervision of my thesis advisor, Dr. Melanie Janzen.

It is my belief that children are competent, capable individuals who understand and explore the world in different ways; that children come to our classrooms with important life experiences and stories that they express and communicate in different ways to their classroom communities. Therefore, it is our responsibility as teachers to give children opportunities to express themselves and make meaning of the world around them using all their available expressive, communicative and cognitive languages (including words, illustrations, dramatic play, movement and dance). This research that I will be conducting is a collaborative process, involving the researcher (myself), the classroom teacher, and, if you consent, your child as a student within this classroom. Together we will embark on a journey to co-construct an English literacies workshop where dance and movement are viewed as a means of expression and meaning-making. I want to be clear that when I use the word *dance* I am not referring to traditional choreographed dance that one would find in a dance studio, but rather embodied expression, purposeful gesture and movement aimed to express oneself.

I hope to gain an understanding of and think critically about the culture of writers' workshop (called literacies workshop in the research) within the classroom. With this in mind the purpose of this research is to develop a better understanding on two specific issues. Firstly, I would like to work together with the teacher and the students to inform the structure of literacies workshop to better include multiple means of expression, with a specific focus on movement and

dance. Secondly, I hope to illustrate the ways in which children engage with multiple ways of communicating, specifically in regards to dance and movement, and how these engagements influence children as meaning-makers and storytellers. It is important to me that the research be informed by children's experiences and ideas, so I intend to create space for children's voices, ideas, questions and experiences within the data collection. In other words, I hope to understand the ways in which dance and movement as a means of expression influence children's meaning-making experiences. This would not be possible without the voice and agency of the child participants.

This research project aims simply to collect and interpret data from everyday literacies workshop experiences. Just as they do throughout the normal school day, children will be taking on the role as active participants in their own learning. The research will not interfere with the regular learning and activities of the classroom. The basic structure of literacies workshop will remain the same and it will continue to include the ways children already express themselves, including writing, drawing, oral story-telling and drama. *It is important to note that all students will participate in literacies workshop equally whether families provide consent or not, as the consent being sought is to use data of your child's experiences to inform the thesis.* No artificial engagements will be planned for the class for the purpose of the research.

In January or February 2019, I will begin my research. I will collect data over a four to six-week period, in January through March. Data collection is the gathering of learning experiences which will occur during English literacies workshop. The regular classroom schedule will not be disrupted during this time and data collection will be unobtrusive as it will consist of practices already occurring in the classroom.

I am seeking your consent, as well as your child's assent, to use the data collected to inform my thesis. Data collection will involve me making notes of children's activities and responses during the workshops. As well as videos and photographs of students engaging in movement which will be taken by myself and the classroom teacher. All audio data will be transcribed by me and all data may be shared with my research supervisor as I learn to conduct data analysis. Included with this consent letter you will find a checklist highlighting the types of data to be used. You and your child will be able to select which types of data you are comfortable giving consent/assent for me to use.

In my final thesis I plan to refer to students' conversations, ideas, experiences and work samples that may provide insight into children's meaning-making experiences. Excerpts of students' conversations, as well as work samples, may appear in the final thesis but will in no way identify students. When I refer to students, pseudonyms (made-up names) will be used to keep their work, experiences and conversations anonymous. If videos are used in the final thesis I will seek special permission from you. At that time you will be sent a copy of the video for you and your child to review and a permission form will be sent along with the video. If you and your child are comfortable with the video being shared in the final thesis you may indicate this on the permission form. There will be no consequences for your child if you choose not to provide permission for the video to be used in the final thesis. Please note that all videos of children will only be viewed by me (and my research supervisor) unless as stated above you have given special permission for the video to be used. Photographs may be used in the final thesis if you have provided consent. If photographs or videos are used in the final thesis I will ensure that the students' faces are not visible; that is, I will either ensure the photo or video does not display students' faces and other identifiable features and/or I will blur out the faces and other identifiable features.

All data used will be kept locked in a cabinet in my home office until the completion of my thesis. It is important to note that if your permission is granted your child will not be identified by name or image.

Your permission for me to use the data about your child must be given voluntarily. I want to assure you that absolutely no consequences will arise from giving or withholding permission. To ease any pressure you might feel I have arranged that all consent and assent forms be sent in a sealed envelope that I have provided to the school office and not to me. Included in this package is an envelope addressed to [REDACTED], the school secretary. Please return your consent forms sealed in this envelope to the secretary who will store the consent letters in a locked cabinet in the office. I will not be able to access these consent forms until the completion of the data collection phase and after the end of the term (March 29, 2019). At this time, I will open the sealed envelopes and compile the data for only those students for whom I received assent and consent. Any students whose families did not provide consent will have data about them destroyed and will not have their ideas, experiences, videos, or work included or referenced in the final thesis or any other subsequent presentations or publications. If at any point you or your

child changes your mind regarding consent during the data collection period, you are free to withdraw at any time in writing which can be given or sent to the school secretary in a sealed envelope. Withdrawal of consent in writing will be added to the consent forms and I will not have access to this information until all the end of the school term. If permission is not given or is withdrawn at any time, no data regarding your child will be included or referred to in the thesis. You may also withdraw your consent up until the final draft of the thesis has been prepared, likely around September 2019, by contacting me at the school (204) [REDACTED] or by email (ummagnu9@myumanitoba.ca) or my research supervisor (melanie.janzen@umanitoba.ca or 204-[REDACTED]).

I have received permission to conduct this research from my school principal, [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] School Division Assistant Superintendent, [REDACTED]. I have made a formal request for their consent and they have provided me with permission to proceed. If you have any questions or concerns about this study you are welcome to contact the school principal [REDACTED] my thesis advisor Dr. Melanie Janzen at (204) 480-1451 or melanie.janzen@umanitoba.ca, or the Human Ethics Coordinator at (204) 474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca.

If you decide to give consent/assent for me to use data pertaining to your child for the purpose of my research, I would be delighted to share a copy of the final thesis and/or a summary of the results with you and your family. My hope is to complete the writing of this thesis by February of 2020. Included is a form where you may indicate whether or not you would like a copy of the completed thesis and/or a summary of the results. In addition, a copy will be available at the school office and the Parent Council will be informed when it is available to be viewed by interested parents.

I will also be available to discuss this research study with you. You are encouraged to contact me at school [REDACTED] or via email ummagnu9@myumanitoba.ca for further information or with any questions or concerns you may have. Additionally, I have scheduled a parent information evening at the school on February 5th, 2019. Please see the attached information for more details.

Please discuss this letter with your family, including your child, to determine whether or not you and your child agree to provide consent and assent for this study. I have attached a parent information sheet which includes a simplified list of what the research entails to help

Appendix A

support families with these conversations. Your signature and your child's printed name signify that you are providing permission for the use of the data which you have indicated with a checkmark. Please return a copy of the consent and assent forms to [REDACTED] in the school office by Monday February 11th.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my research and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Magnus

Learning Support Teacher
[REDACTED]

Dear Room [REDACTED] Families,

I am currently working on my Masters of Education degree at the University of Manitoba. The title of my thesis is The Language of Dance: Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies. I aim to develop a better understanding of how dance and movement can be included into writer's workshop and how these engagements influence our experiences as meaning-makers. It is important to note that the learning in the classroom will continue to run as it has all year and I will be documenting experiences and moments of literacy learning to inform my research.

Together with this letter you will have received several sheets that are intended to provide information regarding my research and use of student data. I have also included parental consent and student assent forms which I am hoping you will read over, sign and return to the school office in the envelope provided. This is a fair amount of information to digest, so with this in mind I would like to invite you and your child to an information session about the study.

Thesis Information Session

Tuesday February, 5th 2019

Room [REDACTED] – [REDACTED] School

This session is intended to provide you with the opportunity for in-person information about the study. I will present a brief summary of the thesis plan as well as information about the use of student data for which I am asking your permission to use. I will also provide time to respond to any questions you may have. The principal, [REDACTED], and my thesis advisor, Dr. Melanie Janzen will attend the session as well.

If you would like to attend this information session please contact me at school by phone [REDACTED] or via email (ummagnu9@myumanitoba.ca). If you are unable to make it on this date, we can make an alternate meeting. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding my study.

Sincerely,
Jenni Magnus



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Faculty of Education

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Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study (Guardian)

Date: January 28, 2019

Study: The Language of Dance: Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Magnus
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba
Phone: (204) [REDACTED]
Email: ummagnu9@myumanitoba.ca

Research Supervisor: Dr. Melanie Janzen
Associate Professor
University of Manitoba
Phone: (204) 480-1451
Email: melanie.janzen@umanitoba.ca

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of how dance and movement can be included into writer's workshop (called literacies workshop in this research). I aim to critically think about the culture of literacies workshop and together co-create a literacies workshop where dance and movement are viewed as a means of expression and meaning-making. Through the analysis of data, I plan to illustrate the ways in which children engage with multiple ways of communicating, with a specific focus on dance and movement, and how these engagements affect our pedagogical understanding as teachers, as well as how these engagements influence children's experiences as meaning-makers.

Procedures: This study will be a four to six-week case study taking place during the classroom teacher's literacies workshop, which occurs each day for 60 - 90 min. The research will not interfere with the regular learning activities and will take place in the natural context of classroom life. I am seeking consent and assent to use data (including written documentation of observations and conversations, audio recorded conversations, photographs, videos and student's

Appendix C

work samples) that is already being collected for classroom use during literacies workshop. Data will be collected for a four to six-week period in January, February or March 2019.

Recording Devices: Recording devices may include audio recorders, video recorders, cameras and/or tablets. Both video recordings and photographs may be used as data. No identifying photographs will be used in the final thesis. If videos are included in the final thesis special permission from families will be attained.

Benefits: A benefit of participation is to support the developing understanding of multiple ways of communicating and meaning-making in the classroom and to support best teaching practices among educators.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks to participants in this study. In order to assure families that there is absolutely no positive or negative consequence to permitting or restricting participation and to alleviate any perceived bias, all consent and assent forms will be addressed to the school secretary. All sealed consent and assent forms will be locked in a cabinet in the school office until the end of the school term, March 29, 2019. The Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor will not know whether or not permission is given until all sealed consent forms are opened at the completion of the term. This information will *not* be shared with the collaborating classroom teacher. Only data pertaining to those students who received consent and assent may be used in the final thesis. Data concerning any student who *did not* receive consent and assent will *not* be used in the writing of the thesis.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: In order to ensure the confidentiality of all participants, both the students and their teacher will be given pseudonyms when referring to consenting participants. In addition, the school name and district will be assigned pseudonyms. No participants will be identified by name in the final thesis. If permission is granted to use images or video, no faces or identifying attributes will be shown. All data will be kept confidential. Electronic data will be locked by password protection and physical data will be locked in cabinets in the Principal Investigator's home. Data will only be seen by the Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated or remunerated for their participation in this study.

Withdrawal from the Study: Parental consent and student assent must be given voluntarily and can be withdrawn at any time without consequence. If at any time parents or students change their minds they are free to withdraw from the study in writing which can be given or sent to the school secretary in a sealed envelope. March 29, 2019. After this students and parents are still free to withdraw their consent and assent until the final draft of the thesis has been prepared (September 2019) by contacting the Principal Investigator or by contacting the Research Supervisor at the phone numbers or emails provided above.

Debriefing: There will be no debriefing required for this study.

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Research Dissemination: Only the Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor will have access to data. Findings from this study will be used in the final thesis and may also be used in subsequent publications or presentations. The anonymity of students, teacher, school and district will be upheld in any publication or presentation relating to this study.

Sharing of the Study: A copy of the final thesis and a summary of results will be made available to all participants (in or around February of 2020). Families who would like to receive a copy of the thesis may indicate their interest on the consent form.

Destruction of Data: Data concerning students who did not receive consent or give assent will not be used or referenced in the final thesis. Data concerning students who did receive consent and give assent will remain locked in the Principal Investigators home until it is destroyed in December 2020.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

You have the right to consent to some data methods and not others, as you see fit. For example, you could consent to the use of audio data and field notes, but not to video. You can use the check boxes to specify your consent in regards to data sources that can be used in this research project.

I give consent to Jennifer Magnus to use data relating to my child for the purpose of her thesis study and subsequent research presentations and publications. I consent to include:
(please check all boxes that apply to indicate consent)

- ☐ Field notes about my child, including conversations both written and audio recorded
- ☐ Photographs (no identifying images will appear in the final thesis)

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- ☐ Video recordings (videos will not be included in the final thesis without additional consent. If additional consent is needed, I will contact you.)
- ☐ Copies of work samples or artifacts representing student's experiences (without student's name or other identifiable information)

I understand that my child will not be identified in the final thesis by either name or image, unless special consent was given. I understand that the final thesis may contain written-out conversations that involve my child, non-identifying photographs, and/or work samples (if I checked the boxes above). I grant permission for my child to participate in this study.

Child's Name: _____

Parents/Guardian's Name: _____

Signature of Consent: _____

Date: _____

Request for a Copy of the Completed Thesis and/or a Summary of the Results

An electronic, PDF copy of the completed thesis and/or a summary of results will be available for you upon its completion. The estimated timeline for its completion is February 2020. A copy of the thesis and of the summary of results will also be made available at the school office. Please select whether or not you would like a summary of results and/or thesis mailed to you.

You may select both the thesis and the summary, if you choose.

___ Yes, I would like to receive a copy of the final thesis.

___ Yes, I would like to receive a copy of the summary of results.

___ No, thank you. I do not require a copy of the thesis or the summary of results."

If you have selected this option, please provide the email address to where you would like it sent:



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Student Assent Form

Please talk about this study with your child. If she/he assents to have Jennifer Magnus reference data relating to themselves in the final thesis then please have *him/her sign the form by printing their name on the line below.*

I, _____ (student name), provide assent for Ms Jenni to use data relating to me in the writing of her thesis for the Faculty of Education, at the University of Manitoba. I understand that Ms Jenni's thesis may contain written-out conversations using 'made-up' names and/or anonymous samples of my work (if my parent/guardian has checked these boxes). I understand that I will not be identified in the final thesis by name or image and that no identifying photographs or video recordings will be used in the final thesis, unless my parents/guardian and myself give special consent.

(Parent/Guardian's Signature)

(Student print name here)

(Date)

(Parent printed name)

Appendix E

Possible Ways to Talk to Your Child About Considering His/Her Assent for the Study

There is a lot of information for you and your child to consider about this study. Due to the Research Ethics Board's requirements much of the information as well as the consent and assent forms are very technical and wordy. So in an effort to help you have a conversation with your child and talk about the study I am including some possible ways you might want to word the discussion with him/her. It is very important that your child have all the information they need so that they may make an informed decision about whether or not they would like give their assent.

- Ms Jenni is working on a research project for her University program. She is interested in the different ways that children like to share their stories. In your classroom you already share stories by writing, drawing, making videos and telling stories out loud to each other. For her research project Ms Jenni is exploring the idea of using dance and movement as ways of telling stories and what you think about different ways of telling stories.
- When Ms Jenni uses the word dance it is important to know that she does not mean the kind of dance you would do in a dance class but she means using our bodies to tell stories and express ourselves.
- For six weeks after winter break during your English writer's workshop Ms Jenni will be taking notes, taking photographs, looking at some of the stories you are telling and how you would like to tell them, reading entries from your writing folder and inviting you to join in conversations about being a storyteller. These are things that Ms Jenni already does when she works in your classroom so nothing will change in the classroom. She may also audio record some of your conversations and video some of your activities.
- After Spring Break Ms Jenni will look back over all the *data* (the notes, photos, conversations, and your work) in order to better understand how dance and movement can be included into writer's workshop and what experiences we have together while exploring storytelling with our bodies.
- Ms Jenni is asking for your *assent* (your permission) to let her use the data to help her write her thesis (a written story of what you did together). Ms Jenni hopes that her thesis will help her, your teacher and possibly other teachers to better understand how important it is to tell stories in many different ways.
- Ms Jenni will not use your name or any photographs that will show who you are in her thesis. If you give her permission she may use some of the things you have said or written about what we have done during writer's workshop. If Ms Jenni wants to use any videos you have created she will send you a copy to look at first and you will get to decide if she can use it or not! It is completely up to you if you feel conformable with Ms Jenni using your video and you can say no if you are not comfortable sharing the video. Ms Jenni will replace your name with a *pseudonym* (a made-up name) whenever she refers to you and your work. She will make sure that you stay *anonymous* (nobody will know it is you).
- I (your parent) will also have to decide if I give Ms Jenni permission. We can say yes or no and it will not change what you get to do in the classroom. In other words there will be no consequence! Ms Jenni will not know our decision until after all data collected. To make sure we don't feel pressure Ms Jenni has organized for the forms we need to fill out to be sent to the school office. Ms Jenni will only get to open our letters after Spring Break. Your teacher will not get to know if you said yes or no to Ms Jenni.

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- If you choose to give Ms Jenni your permission but then change your mind later on that is okay too. You can let me (your parent) know and we can tell the office. Ms Jenni does not need to know this either.
- If you understand all of this information and you choose to give Ms Jenni your permission to use the data to help her with her thesis then you can print your name on the Student Assent Form.



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Dear Classroom Teacher,

I am currently working on my Masters of Education degree at the University of Manitoba, for which I am presently constructing a research project for my thesis. My thesis is a case study entitled *The Language of Dance: Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies*. The research is being conducted under the supervision of my thesis advisor, Dr. Melanie Janzen.

It is my belief that children are competent, capable individuals who understand and explore the world in different ways; that children come to our classrooms with important life experiences and stories that they express and communicate in different ways to their classroom communities. Therefore, it is our responsibility as teachers to give children opportunities to express themselves and make meaning of the world around them using all their available expressive, communicative and cognitive languages (including words, illustrations, dramatic play, movement and dance). This research that I am conducting will be a collaborative process, involving the researcher (myself), a classroom teacher and the students in the classroom. Together we will embark on a journey to co-construct an English literacies workshop where dance and movement are viewed as a means of expression and meaning-making. I want to be clear that when I use the word *dance* I am not referring to traditional choreographed dance that one would find in a dance studio, but rather embodied expression, purposeful gesture and movement aimed to express oneself.

I hope to gain an understanding of and think critically about the culture of writers' workshop (called literacies workshop in the research) within the classroom. With this in mind the purpose of this research is to develop a better understanding on two specific issues. Firstly, I would like to work together with the teacher and the students to inform the structure of literacies workshop to better include multiple means of expression, with a specific focus on movement and dance. Secondly, I hope to illustrate the ways in which children engage with multiple ways of communicating, specifically in regards to dance and movement, and how these engagements influence children as meaning-makers and storytellers. It is important to me that the research be

informed by children's experiences and ideas, so I intend to create space for children's voices, ideas, questions and experiences within the data collection. In other words, I hope to understand the ways in which dance and movement as a means of expression influence children's meaning-making experiences. This would not be possible without the voice and agency of the classroom teacher and the child participants.

I am writing to invite you to participate as a collaborating teacher in this study. Your decision to participate must be given freely and voluntarily. The participating teacher may withdraw at any time without consequence. Should you change your mind you may put your withdrawal into writing and send it to either myself or my Research Supervisor by email or written letter. It is important to note that your decision to permit, restrict or withdraw consent will result in no negative or positive consequences. As you know, I in no way have any authority over classroom teachers and I have no administrative authority to make decisions that affect you or any classroom teacher with whom I work. In order to help interested teachers decide if this study is right for you please use the following criteria (below) to help you self-determine whether your practice aligns with what I am seeking for this study.

- ☐ The teacher must participate in some form of writer's workshop (called literacies workshop in this study) in their classroom
- ☐ The teacher must already include multimodal means of meaning making and expression in their literacies workshop; including drawing, oral storytelling, and physical storytelling
- ☐ At times the teacher must allow children to choose the mode they use to express themselves
- ☐ The teacher must be willing to collaborate and co-teach literacies workshop with me for the four to six-week inquiry and allow natural opportunities for movement and dance to be explored as part of the literacies workshop
- ☐ The teacher must be willing to have conversations about their practice and debrief our workshops and plan further workshops together

Interested teachers who self-identify as meeting the criteria and who are interested in participating in the study will be asked to respond to me directly via email by a deadline of about one week after the invitation has been sent out. If more than one teacher expresses an interest in participating in the research then I will select the teacher on a first-come, first-served basis.

This research project aims simply to collect and interpret data from everyday literacies workshop experiences. It will not interfere with the regular learning and activities of your classroom. The basic structure of literacies workshop will remain the same; it will continue to include the ways children already express themselves, and time to discuss what we have

observed when working one-on-one, in small groups or what came up during sharing time. This information will be used to plan the following literacies workshop. If you provide consent literacies workshop will continue to be co-planned however we will deliberately infuse opportunities for children to authentically engage in the workshop using dance and movement. Just as they do throughout the normal school day, children will be taking on the role as active participants in their own learning and no artificial engagements will be planned for the class for the purpose of the research.

In January or February of 2019, I will begin my research. I will collect data over a four to six-week period, January through March. If you agree, the principal will arrange the schedule so I'm assigned to your classroom during that time. Your classroom schedule will not be disrupted during this time and data collection will be unobtrusive as it will consist of practices already occurring in your classroom. As the classroom teacher (if you choose to provide consent) you will be invited to participate in two semi-structured interviews where you will be asked to reflect on the literacy experiences occurring in your classroom. The first interview will take place before the formal four to six-week literacy inquiry begins and the second after the completion of data collection. You will be provided with questions that may guide the conversation before the interview takes place. Both the interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed and used as part of the data for the final thesis.

I am seeking your consent to use data that I will collect in my field notebook about our conversations that we have during the four to six-week inquiry. As the children in your classroom will also be possible participants in this study and to comply with the University of Manitoba Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board requirements, a detailed letter will be sent to the families of the children in your classroom including a consent form for parents/guardians and assent form to be signed by students. Attached you will find a copy of this letter and permission forms as well as all other correspondence that is being sent to the families. As you will read, I am making sure that families can make an informed decision both freely and anonymously. You are also invited to join the parents/guardians and students at a brief information evening where I will present the plan for the study and answer any questions you and they may have. Families will have the opportunity to select which (if any) forms of data they are willing to consent to. In order to ensure families that there is no consequence to their decision to provide or restrict consent, all forms will be returned to the school office in a sealed envelope.

I will not have access to these forms until the end of the school term (March 29, 2019) and thus will not know who has given or withheld consent until after the inquiry in your classroom is complete. Data will only be used if it is referring to students for whom consent and assent have been provided. As the classroom teacher, you will not have access to the consent or assent forms and this information will not be shared with you at any time.

Data collection during the inquiry may include written documentation of observations and conversations, audio recorded conversations, photographs, videos and students' work samples. All data will be transcribed by me and may be shared with my research supervisor as I learn to conduct data analysis. Please note that all audio recordings and videos of children will only be viewed by me and my research supervisor. All participants (the teacher and the students) will have pseudonyms assigned and no identifying information will be included in the thesis. Photographs may be used in the final thesis but I will ensure that your and your students' faces are not visible; that is, I will either ensure the photo does not display students' faces and other identifiable features and/or I will blur out the faces and other identifiable features. If videos are included in the final thesis special permission will be requested from the students and the parents/guardians of the children who appear in the video. In my final thesis I plan to refer to our conversations, our conversations with students, their ideas, experiences and work samples that may provide insight into children's meaning-making experiences. Excerpts of both our and students' conversations, as well as work samples, may appear in the final thesis but will in no way identify anyone. All data used will be kept locked in a cabinet in my home office until the completion of my thesis. It is important to note that if your permission is granted you and the students in your classroom will not be identified by name or image.

I have received permission to conduct this research from our school principal, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] School Division Assistant Superintendent, [REDACTED]. If you have any questions or concerns about this study you are welcome to contact [REDACTED], my thesis advisor Dr. Melanie Janzen at (204) 480-1451 or melanie.janzen@umanitoba.ca, or the Human Ethics Coordinator at (204) 474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. If you decide to give consent to be a participant in this study, I would be delighted to share the final thesis with you. My hope is to complete the writing of this thesis by February 2020. Included is a form where you may indicate whether or not you would like a copy of the completed thesis.

I will also be available to discuss this research study with you at any time or if you would like any further information or if you have any questions. Please complete the form attached if you choose to provide your consent to participate in the study.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my research and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Magnus

Learning Support Teacher

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Jennifer Magnus.



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Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study (Classroom Teacher)

Date: January 23, 2019

Study: The Language of Dance: Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Magnus
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba
Phone: (204) [REDACTED]
Email: ummagnu9@myumanitoba.ca

Research Supervisor: Dr. Melanie Janzen
Associate Professor
University of Manitoba
Phone: (204) 480-1451
Email: melanie.janzen@umanitoba.ca

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This consent form should be returned to me within one week of you receiving it. The teacher participant will be chosen on a first-come, first-served basis.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of how dance and movement can be included into writer's workshop (called literacies workshop in this research). I aim to critically think about the culture of literacies workshop and together co-create a literacies workshop where dance and movement are viewed as a means of expression and meaning-making. Through the analysis of data, I plan to illustrate the ways in which children engage with multiple ways of communicating, with a specific focus on dance and movement, and how these engagements affect our pedagogical understanding as teachers, as well as how these engagements influence children's experiences as meaning-makers.

Procedures: This study will be a four to six-week case study taking place during the classroom teacher's literacies workshop, which occurs each day for 60 - 90 min. I am seeking your consent to participate as a teacher in the study. It will not interfere with the regular learning and

activities of your classroom. The basic structure of literacies workshop will remain the same; it will continue to include the ways children already express themselves, and time to discuss what we have observed when working one-on-one, in small groups or what came up during sharing time. If you provide consent literacies workshop will continue to be co-planned however we will deliberately infuse opportunities for children to engage in the workshop using dance and movement. Just as they do throughout the normal school day, children will be taking on the role as active participants in their own learning and no artificial engagements will be planned for the class for the purpose of the research. This will not require any additional time on your part.

In addition, you will be invited to participate in two semi-structured interviews (about one hour each) where you will be asked to reflect on the literacy experiences occurring in your classroom. The first interview will take place before the formal six-week literacy inquiry begins and the second after the completion of data collection. You will be provided with questions that may guide the conversation before the interview takes place. Both the interviews as well as our regular planning conversations and debriefing conversations will be audio recorded and transcribed and used as part of the data for the final thesis.

I am also seeking your consent to use data that I will collect in my field notebook about our conversations that we have during the four six-week inquiry about our planning of the workshops and our observations of children. This will not require any additional time on your part.

Data will be collected for a four to six-week period in January, February or March 2019.

Recording Devices: Recording devices may include audio recorders, video recorders, cameras and/or tablets. Both video recordings and photographs may be used as data. No identifying photographs or videos will be used in the final thesis. If videos are included in the final thesis in which your image is present, special permission will be attained from you.

Benefits: A benefit of participation is to support the developing understanding of multiple ways of communicating and meaning-making in the classroom and to support best teaching practices among educators.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks to participants in this study. In order to assure families that there is absolutely no positive or negative consequence to permitting or restricting participation and to alleviate any perceived bias, all consent and assent forms will be addressed to the school secretary. All sealed consent and assent forms will be locked in a cabinet in the school office until the end of the school term, March 29, 2019. The Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor will not know whether or not permission is given until all sealed consent forms are opened at the completion of the term. This information will *not* be shared with the collaborating classroom teacher. Only data pertaining to those students who received consent and assent may be used in the final thesis. Data concerning any student who *did not* receive consent and assent will *not* be used in the writing of the thesis.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: In order to ensure the confidentiality of all participants, both the students and their teacher will be given pseudonyms when referring to consenting participants. In addition, the school name and district will be assigned pseudonyms. No

participants will be identified by name or image in the final thesis. All data will be kept confidential. Electronic data will be locked by password protection and physical data will be locked in cabinets in the Principal Investigator's home. Data will only be seen by the Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated or remunerated for their participation in this study.

Withdrawal from the Study: Your consent must be given voluntarily and can be withdrawn at any time without consequence. You may withdraw from the study at any time by putting your withdrawal into writing and sending it to either myself or the Research Supervisor by email or written letter (at the contact information above).

Debriefing: There will be no debriefing required for this study.

Research Dissemination: Only the Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor will have access to data. Findings from this study will be used in the final thesis and may also be used in subsequent publications or presentations. The anonymity of students, teacher, school and district will be upheld in any publication or presentation relating to this study.

Sharing of the Study: A copy of the final thesis and/or a summary of the results will be made available to all participants (in or around February of 2020). Families who would like to receive a copy of the thesis may indicate their interest on the consent form.

Destruction of Data: Data about students who did not receive consent or give assent will not be used or referenced in the final thesis. Data concerning students who did receive consent and give assent will remain locked in the Principal Investigators home until it is destroyed by December 2020.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Name: _____

Signature of Consent: _____

Date: _____

I would like a summary of the results and/or copy of the thesis upon completion (in or around February 2020):

____ Yes, I would like to receive a copy of the final thesis.

____ Yes, I would like to receive a copy of the summary of results.

____ No, thank you. I do not require a copy of the thesis or the summary of results.



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Assistant Superintendent, School Division

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear ,

I am a Learning Support Teacher at School and I am also enrolled in the Master of Education program at the University of Manitoba. I am currently constructing a research project for my thesis. My thesis is a case study entitled *The Language of Dance: Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies*. The research is being conducted under the supervision of my thesis advisor, Dr. Melanie Janzen.

It is my belief that children are competent, capable individuals who understand and explore the world in different ways; that children come to our classrooms with important life experiences and stories that they express and communicate in different ways to their classroom communities. Therefore, it is our responsibility as teachers to give children opportunities to express themselves and make meaning of the world around them using all their available expressive, communicative and cognitive languages (including words, illustrations, dramatic play, movement and dance). This research that I am conducting will be a collaborative process, involving the researcher (myself), a classroom teacher and the students in the classroom. Together we will embark on a journey to co-construct an English literacies workshop where dance and movement are viewed as a means of expression and meaning-making. I want to be clear that when I use the word *dance* I am not referring to traditional choreographed dance that one would find in a dance studio, but rather embodied expression, purposeful gesture and movement aimed to express oneself.

I hope to gain an understanding of and think critically about the culture of writers' workshop (called literacies workshop in the research) within the classroom. With this in mind the purpose of this research is to develop a better understanding on two specific issues. Firstly, I would like to work together with the teacher and the students to inform the structure of literacies workshop to better include multiple means of expression, with a specific focus on movement and dance. Secondly, I hope to illustrate the ways in which children engage with multiple ways of communicating, specifically in regards to dance and movement, and how these engagements influence children as meaning-makers and storytellers. It is important to me that the research be informed by children's experiences and ideas, so I intend to create space for children's voices, ideas, questions and experiences within the data collection. In other words, I hope to understand the ways in which dance and movement as a means of expression influence children's meaning-making experiences. This would not be possible without the voice and agency of the classroom teacher and the child participants.

This research project aims to collect data from everyday literacies workshop experiences, including written documentation of observations and conversations, audio recorded conversations, photographs, videos and students' work samples. During the inquiry, the participating teacher and I will deliberately infuse opportunities for children to authentically engage in literacies workshop using dance and movement. My hope is to review and interpret this data in order to inform future workshops and construct my understanding of dance and movement as a means of expression and tool for making meaning.

The basic structure of literacies workshop will remain the same and will continue to include the ways children already express themselves. Just as they do throughout the normal school day, children will be taking on the role as active participants in their own learning and no artificial engagements will be planned for the class for the purpose of the research. Data collection will take place over a four to six-week period beginning in January or February 2019. The regular classroom schedule will not be disrupted during this time and data collection will be unobtrusive as it will consist of practices already occurring in the participating classroom. My expectation is that data will be collected during the classroom's literacies workshop. This research is being constructed in context with the learning engagements that are already occurring within the participating classroom's literacies workshop.

In order to comply with the University of Manitoba Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board requirements, a detailed letter will be sent to the families of the students in the

participating classroom, including consent forms for parents/guardians and an assent form to be signed by the students. The participating teacher will also be sent a detailed letter which will include a consent form to be signed. Attached you will find copies of these letters and permission forms. Through the letters I making certain that families have the information they need so they can make an informed decision both freely and anonymously. Along with the information letter, families will be invited to attend a brief information evening where I will present the plan for the study and answer any questions families have. Families will then have the opportunity to select which (if any) forms of data they are willing to consent to. The completed consent and assent forms will go into sealed envelopes and be mailed or delivered to our school secretary. The forms will be kept in a locked cabinet in the school office and I will not have access to these forms until the end of term (March 29, 2019). I will not know who has given or withheld consent until after all data collection is completed. The classroom teacher will not have access to this information at any time and will not know which families provided or withheld consent. Data will only be used if it is referring to students for whom consent and assent have been provided. The classroom teacher and the students will have pseudonyms assigned and no identifying information will be included in the thesis. No identifying photographs will appear in the final thesis. If videos are included in the final thesis special permission will be requested from the students and the parents/guardians of the children who appear in the video. This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board.

If you have any questions about this research project, or would like to discuss it further, please contact me at [REDACTED] School [REDACTED] or by email at ummagnu9@myumanitoba.ca. You may also reach my thesis advisor, Dr. Melanie Janzen, at (204) 480-1451 or via email at melanie.janzen@umanitoba.ca.

If you are willing to provide permission for this research project, please sign below. Your signature will indicate that you have granted permission for my research to take place in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] School in [REDACTED] School Division as detailed. Please return the signed copy of the consent form to me using the envelope provided. Please keep the duplicate form for your records.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my research and for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Magnus



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Education

University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-9015
Fax (204) 474-7551
www.umanitoba.ca/education

Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study (Superintendent)

Date: January 20, 2019

Study: The Language of Dance: Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Magnus
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba
Phone: (204) [REDACTED]
Email: ummagnu9@myumanitoba.ca

Research Supervisor: Dr. Melanie Janzen
Associate Professor
University of Manitoba
Phone: (204) 480-1451
Email: melanie.janzen@umanitoba.ca

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of how dance and movement can be included into writer's workshop (called literacies workshop in this research). I aim to critically think about the culture of literacies workshop and together co-create a literacies workshop where dance and movement are viewed as a means of expression and meaning-making. Through the analysis of data, I plan to illustrate the ways in which children engage with multiple ways of communicating, with a specific focus on dance and movement, and how these engagements affect our pedagogical understanding as teachers, as well as how these engagements influence children's experiences as meaning-makers.

Procedures: This study will be a four to six-week case study taking place during the classroom teacher's literacies workshop, which occurs each day for 60 - 90 min. The research will not interfere with the regular learning activities and will take place in the natural context of classroom life. I am seeking consent to conduct the research in my school with a collaborating teacher, to include children and to collect data (including written documentation of observations and conversations, audio recorded conversations, photographs, videos and student's work

samples) that is already being collected for classroom use during literacies workshop. Data will be collected for a four to six-week period in January, February or March 2019.

Recording Devices: Recording devices may include audio recorders, video recorders, cameras and/or tablets. Both video recordings and photographs may be used as data. No identifying photographs will be used in the final thesis. If videos are included in the final thesis special permission from families will be attained.

Benefits: A benefit of participation is to support the developing understanding of multiple ways of communicating and meaning-making in the classroom and to support best teaching practices among educators.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks to participants in this study. In order to assure families that there is absolutely no positive or negative consequence to permitting or restricting participation and to alleviate any perceived bias, all consent and assent forms will be addressed to the school secretary. All sealed consent and assent forms will be locked in a cabinet in the school office until the end of the school term, March 29, 2019. The Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor will not know whether or not permission is given until all sealed consent forms are opened at the completion of the term. This information will *not* be shared with the collaborating classroom teacher. Only data pertaining to those students who received consent and assent may be used in the final thesis. Data concerning any student who *did not* receive consent and assent *will not* be used in the writing of the thesis.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: In order to ensure the confidentiality of all participants, both the students and their teacher will be given pseudonyms when referring to consenting participants. In addition, the school name and district will be assigned pseudonyms. No participants will be identified by name or image in the final thesis. All data will be kept confidential. Electronic data will be locked by password protection and physical data will be locked in cabinets in the Principal Investigator's home. Data will only be seen by the Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated or remunerated for their participation in this study.

Withdrawal from the Study: Parental consent and student assent must be given voluntarily and can be withdrawn at any time without consequence. If at any time parents or students change their minds they are free to withdraw from the study by contacting the school secretary until March 29, 2019. After this students and parents are still free to withdraw their consent and assent until the final draft of the thesis has been prepared (September 2019) by contacting the Principal Investigator or by contacting the Research Supervisor. The collaborating teacher is also free to withdraw from the study at any time by contacting me or my research supervisor.

Debriefing: There will be no debriefing required for this study.

Research Dissemination: Only the Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor will have access to data. Findings from this study will be used in the final thesis and may also be used in

subsequent publications or presentations. The anonymity of students, teacher, school and district will be upheld in any publication or presentation relating to this study.

Sharing of the Study: A copy of the final thesis will be made available to you and to all participants (in or around February of 2020). Families who would like to receive a copy of the thesis may indicate their interest on the consent form.

Destruction of Data: Data about students who did not provide consent or give assent will not be used or referenced in the final thesis. Data about students who did provide consent and give assent will remain locked in the Principal Investigators home until it is destroyed in February 2020.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Superintendent's Name: _____

Superintendent's Signature of Consent: _____

Date: _____

I would like a copy of the thesis upon completion (in or around February 2020):

_____ **Yes please**

_____ **No thank you**

Appendix H

UNIVERSITY
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Faculty of Education

University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-9015
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www.umanitoba.ca/education

Ms. [REDACTED]

Administrator, [REDACTED] School

[REDACTED]

Winnipeg, Manitoba

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

As you know, I am currently in the process of developing my thesis for my Master of Education program at the University of Manitoba. I am currently constructing a research project for my thesis. My thesis is a case study entitled *The Language of Dance: Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies*. The research is being conducted under the supervision of my thesis advisor, Dr. Melanie Janzen.

It is my belief that children are competent, capable individuals who understand and explore the world in different ways; that children come to our classrooms with important life experiences and stories that they express and communicate in different ways to their classroom communities. Therefore, it is our responsibility as teachers to give children opportunities to express themselves and make meaning of the world around them using all their available expressive, communicative and cognitive languages (including words, illustrations, dramatic play, movement and dance). This research that I am conducting will be a collaborative process, involving the researcher (myself), a classroom teacher and the students in the classroom. Together we will embark on a journey to co-construct an English literacies workshop where dance and movement are viewed as a means of expression and meaning-making. I want to be clear that when I use the word *dance* I am not referring to traditional choreographed dance that one would find in a dance studio, but rather embodied expression, purposeful gesture and movement aimed to express oneself.

I hope to gain an understanding of and think critically about the culture of writers' workshop (called literacies workshop in the research) within the classroom. With this in mind the

purpose of this research is to develop a better understanding on two specific issues. Firstly, I would like to work together with the teacher and the students to inform the structure of literacies workshop to better include multiple means of expression, with a specific focus on movement and dance. Secondly, I hope to illustrate the ways in which children engage with multiple ways of communicating, specifically in regards to dance and movement, and how these engagements influence children as meaning-makers and storytellers. It is important to me that the research be informed by children's experiences and ideas, so I intend to create space for children's voices, ideas, questions and experiences within the data collection. In other words, I hope to understand the ways in which dance and movement as a means of expression influence children's meaning-making experiences. This would not be possible without the voice and agency of the classroom teacher and the child participants.

This research project aims to collect data from everyday literacies workshop experiences, including written documentation of observations and conversations, audio recorded conversations, photographs, videos and students' work samples. During the inquiry, the participating teacher and I will deliberately infuse opportunities for children to authentically engage in literacies workshop using dance and movement. My hope is to review and interpret this data in order to inform future workshops and construct my understanding of dance and movement as a means of expression and tool for making meaning.

The basic structure of literacies workshop will remain the same and will continue to include the ways children already express themselves. Just as they do throughout the normal school day, children will be taking on the role as active participants in their own learning and no artificial engagements will be planned for the class for the purpose of the research. Data collection will take place over a four to six-week period beginning in January or February 2019. The regular classroom schedule will not be disrupted during this time and data collection will be unobtrusive as it will consist of practices already occurring in the participating classroom. My expectation is that data will be collected during the classroom's literacies workshop. This research is being constructed in context with the learning engagements that are already occurring within the participating classroom's literacies workshop.

In order to comply with the University of Manitoba Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board requirements, a detailed letter will be sent to the families of the students in the participating classroom, including consent forms for parents/guardians and an assent form to be signed by the students. The participating teacher will also be sent a detailed letter which will

include a consent form to be signed. Attached you will find a copy of these letters and permission forms. Through the letters I am making certain that families have the information they need so they can make an informed decision both freely and anonymously. Along with the information letter, families will be invited to attend a brief information evening where I will present the plan for the study and answer any questions families have. At this time, I would like to invite you to join the parents/guardians and students at the information evening. Families will then have the opportunity to select which (if any) forms of data they are willing to consent to. The completed consent and assent forms will go into sealed envelopes and be mailed or delivered to our school secretary. The forms will be kept in a locked cabinet in the school office and I will not have access to these forms until the end of term (March 29, 2019). I will not know who has given or withheld consent until after all data collection is completed. The classroom teacher will not have access to this information at any time and will not know which families provided or withheld consent. Data will only be used if it is referring to students for whom consent and assent have been provided. The classroom teacher and the students will have pseudonyms assigned and no identifying information will be included in the thesis. No identifying photographs will appear in the final thesis. If videos are included in the final thesis special permission will be requested from the students and the parents/guardians of the children who appear in the video. This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB).

If you have any questions about this research project, or would like to discuss it further, please contact me by email at ummagnu9@myumanitoba.ca or please ask to meet with me in person. You may also reach my thesis advisor, Dr. Melanie Janzen, at (204) 480-1451 or via email at melanie.janzen@umanitoba.ca.

If you are willing to provide permission for this research project, please sign below. Your signature will indicate that you have granted permission for my research to take place in [REDACTED] School in [REDACTED] School Division as detailed. Please return the signed copy of the consent form to me using the envelope provided. Please keep the duplicate form for your records.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my research and for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Magnus



UNIVERSITY
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Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study (Administrator)

Date: January 22, 2019

Study: The Language of Dance: Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Magnus
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba
Phone: (204) [REDACTED]
Email: ummagnu9@myumanitoba.ca

Research Supervisor: Dr. Melanie Janzen
Associate Professor
University of Manitoba
Phone: (204) 480-1451
Email: melanie.janzen@umanitoba.ca

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of how dance and movement can be included into writer's workshop (called literacies workshop in this research). I aim to critically think about the culture of literacies workshop and together co-create a literacies workshop where dance and movement are viewed as a means of expression and meaning-making. Through the analysis of data, I plan to illustrate the ways in which children engage with multiple ways of communicating, with a specific focus on dance and movement, and how these engagements affect our pedagogical understanding as teachers, as well as how these engagements influence children's experiences as meaning-makers.

Procedures: This study will be a four to six-week case study taking place during the classroom teacher's literacies workshop, which occurs each day for 60 - 90 min. The research will not interfere with the regular learning activities and will take place in the natural context of classroom life. I am seeking your consent to conduct the research study in our school; to include one classroom teacher the children within that classroom in the study, and to collect data about the workshop process and about the children's experiences within the workshop time (including

written documentation of observations and conversations, audio recorded conversations, photographs, videos and student's work samples) that is already being collected for classroom use during literacies workshop. Data will be collected for a four to six-week period in January, February or March 2019.

Recording Devices: Recording devices may include audio recorders, video recorders, cameras and/or tablets. Both video recordings and photographs may be used as data. No identifying photographs will be used in the final thesis. If videos included in the final thesis special permission from families will be attained.

Benefits: A benefit of participation is to support the developing understanding of multiple ways of communicating and meaning-making in the classroom and to support best teaching practices among educators.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks to participants in this study. In order to assure families that there is absolutely no positive or negative consequence to permitting or restricting participation and to alleviate any perceived bias, all consent and assent forms will be addressed to the school secretary. All sealed consent and assent forms will be locked in a cabinet in the school office until the end of the school term, March 29, 2019. The Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor will not know whether or not permission is given until all sealed consent forms are opened at the completion of the term. This information will *not* be shared with the collaborating classroom teacher. Only data pertaining to those students who received consent and assent may be used in the final thesis. Data concerning any student who *did not* receive consent and assent will *not* be used in the writing of the thesis.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: In order to ensure the confidentiality of all participants, both the students and their teacher will be given pseudonyms when referring to consenting participants. In addition, the school name and district will be assigned pseudonyms. No participants will be identified by name or image in the final thesis. All data will be kept confidential. Electronic data will be locked by password protection and physical data will be locked in cabinets in the Principal Investigator's home. Data will only be seen by the Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated or remunerated for their participation in this study.

Withdrawal from the Study: Parental consent and student assent must be given voluntarily and can be withdrawn at any time without consequence. If at any time parents or students change their minds they are free to withdraw from the study by contacting the school secretary until March 29, 2019. After this students and parents are still free to withdraw their consent and assent until the final draft of the thesis has been prepared (September 2019) by contacting the Principal Investigator or by contacting the Research Supervisor. You and the classroom teacher are also free to withdraw your consent for the study at any time by contacting me or my research supervisor at contact provided above.

Debriefing: There will be no debriefing required for this study.

Research Dissemination: Only the Principal Investigator and the Research Supervisor will have access to data. Findings from this study will be used in the final thesis and may also be used in subsequent publications or presentations. The anonymity of students, teacher, school and district will be upheld in any publication or presentation relating to this study.

Sharing of the Study: A copy of the final thesis will be made available to all participants (in or around February of 2020). Families who would like to receive a copy of the thesis may indicate their interest on the consent form.

Destruction of Data: Data concerning students who did not receive consent or give assent will not be used or referenced in the final thesis. Data concerning students who did receive consent and give assent will remain locked in the Principal Investigators home until it is destroyed by December 2020.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Administrator's Name: _____

Administrator's Signature of Consent: _____

Date: _____

I would like a copy of the thesis upon completion (in or around February 2020):

_____ Yes please

_____ No thank you

Preliminary Teacher Interview – Guiding Questions

The Language of Dance: Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies

The questions that will guide the preliminary teacher interview are:

- 1) Describe your teaching philosophy and your approach to teaching? What influences you?

What is important to you?

- 2) Can you speak about the experiences you have had with literacies workshops
(collaborating with others, exploring different ways of implementing workshops)?

- 3) What are some of the strengths and challenges you find in your or other teachers' literacies workshop?

- 4) Describe what literacy experiences look like in your classroom. In your writer's workshop as well as what this might look like during other times in your day?

- 5) What do you find valuable about the experiences your students are having and why?

In what ways do you incorporate dance and movement into your workshop pedagogy and what are your general observations of children during such experiences?

Final Teacher Interview – Guiding Questions

The Language of Dance: Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies

The questions that will guide the interview are:

- 1) How has this experiences changed your understanding of movement as a meaning-making mode?
- 2) How has this experience influenced your perspectives and understandings of the students in your classroom and their meaning making?
- 3) Can you speak about how these experiences have been important learning for your own pedagogy?
- 4) Did any of the literacy experiences stand out to you as important ‘ah ha’ moments or critical moments for you or the children?
- 5) Can you speak about a few memorable moments from the six-week inquiry?
- 6) What would you change going forward with literacies workshop?



Research Ethics
and Compliance

Human Ethics
208-194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3T 2N2
Phone +204-474-7122
Email: humanethics@umanitoba.ca

PROTOCOL APPROVAL

TO: Jennifer Magnus (Advisor: Melanie Janzen)
Principal Investigator

FROM: Joseph Gordon, Chair
Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)

Re: Protocol #E2018:086 (HS22284)
The Language of Dance: Moving Beyond Traditional Literacies

Effective: January 18, 2019

Expiry: January 18, 2020

Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) has reviewed and approved the above research. ENREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted for the research and purposes described in the application only.
2. Any modification to the research or research materials must be submitted to ENREB for approval before implementation.
3. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be submitted to ENREB as soon as possible.
4. This approval is valid for one year only and a Renewal Request must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date.
5. A Study Closure form must be submitted to ENREB when the research is complete or terminated.
6. The University of Manitoba may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba *Ethics of Research Involving Humans*.

Funded Protocols:

- Please mail/e-mail a copy of this Approval, identifying the related UM Project Number, to the Research Grants Officer in ORS.